



Rodney Chase ..

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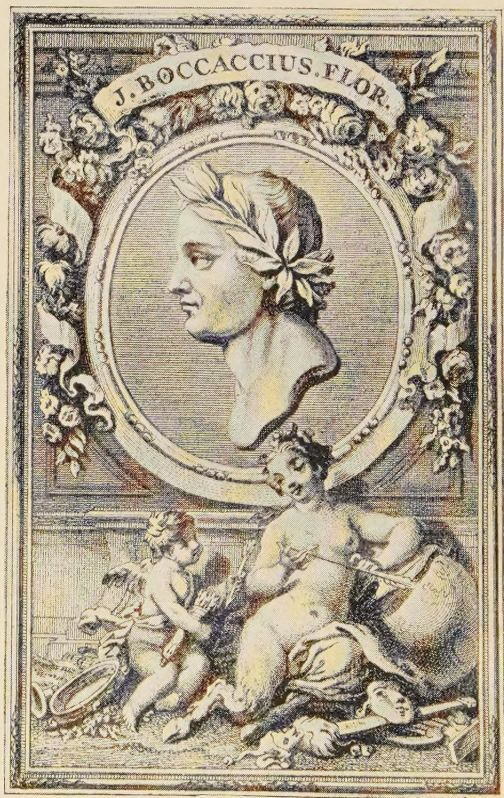
THE DECAMERON

VOL. I.

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FRONTISPIECE. VOL. I.

THE
DECAMERON
By
M. GIOVANNI
BOCCACCIO

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LONDON, 1914
IN FOUR VOLUMES
VOL. I

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THE text on which this edition is based is that published by Sharpe in 1822, which was reprinted from the version of 1804, edited by Edward Dubois, this in turn being founded on the anonymous translation of 1741. The revision of the work made by Mr. W. K. Kelly, for "Bohn's Library," was a considerable improvement on former issues, though the editor's claim to have corrected "every page and almost every line" by the original can hardly be sustained. It is hoped that the present text will prove more acceptable than its predecessors: many passages hitherto needlessly abridged have been amended, and among numerous other restorations may be mentioned the "Proem," the "Conclusion," and the reply to his critics and censors with

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which Boccaccio commences the Fourth Day. With the exception of part of one novel, given in the French rendering of Antoine Le Maçon, the whole of the *Decameron* is here presented in English. The publishers desire to acknowledge their obligations to Mr. S. W. Orson, for his valuable services in revision and in the retranslation of many passages.

It only remains to add that the illustrations to the present issue are reproduced from the plates engraved for the celebrated edition of 1757, and designed by Gravelot, Eisen, Boucher, and others.

INTRODUCTION

THE *Decameron* of Boccaccio is now presented to English readers as a *classic*—a position to which it is entitled, not alone by its graces of style, its wit, and its interesting pictures of social life at and about the epoch of the great Revival of Letters and Arts, but also on account of the influence which it has exercised upon English literature from the days of Chaucer down to our own time. For that which has been said of a very different work*—that “it is the common sun whereat our modern writers have all lighted their little torches”—is also applicable to the *Decameron*, which more or less directly has given inspiration to Chaucer and Sir Philip Sidney, to Cyril Tourneur, Marston, Fletcher, Shakespeare, Dryden, Keats, Tennyson,

* Camden's *Britannia*.



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Longfellow, Swinburne, and a host of minor writers of poetry and fiction.

In order to estimate aright the value of this remarkable collection of stories, it will be necessary to consider the period at which it was produced, and, to some extent, the personality of the author.

Giovanni Boccaccio (whom our early English translators designate John Bochas or Bocace) was born A.D. 1313, probably at Florence, although it is uncertain whether that city or Paris was the place of his nativity. His father, Boccaccio di Chellino, was a Florentine merchant whose family were originally of Certaldo, a small castle situated in the valley of the Elsa, about twenty miles south-west of Florence. Villani, the historian, says that the elder Boccaccio, being in Paris upon his commercial business, married a young lady of that city, who became the mother of Giovanni. Other biographers assert, however, that the stigma of illegitimacy attached to him, affirming that it was not until long after his birth that his father married that lady. Be this as it may, there can be no doubt respecting the year of his birth.

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Petrarch, who was born in 1304, writes to him, "I was nine years old when you were born," thus fixing the date A.D. 1313. It is also certain that he was brought up in Florence, where he commenced his studies under Giovanni di Strada, a celebrated grammarian; but his father, who had no sympathy with letters, took him from school when barely ten years of age, and apprenticed him to a merchant with whom he remained six years in Paris. It was the old story of genius in the fetters of trade, and the merchant, finding that the literary tastes of the young man were too strong to be combated, sent him back to Florence. For some time after his return, his father endeavoured to persuade him to devote his attention to mercantile affairs, and in the twenty-eighth year of his age he was sent to Naples, partly upon business, and also for the purpose of distracting his mind from study. Robert of Anjou, the reigning king of that city, encouraged learning, and his court was the most polished of the age; and during an abode there of eight years, Boccaccio became acquainted with most of the learned men of Italy, especially

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Petrarch, with whom he contracted a friendship that was broken only by death. There also he fell in love with a lady of rank, whose real name he has concealed under that of "Fiammetta." Three persons have been conjecturally mentioned as the object of his passion: the celebrated Joanna of Naples, granddaughter of Robert; Maria, the sister of Joanna; and another Maria, the illegitimate daughter of King Robert, called Mary of Arragon by the historians. But no proofs have been advanced in support of any of these views, and it is far from likely that the identity of *La Fiammetta* will ever now be revealed.

At Naples, Boccaccio visited the tomb of Virgil, and, as if inspired by this momentary association with so great a poet, resolved to cut himself, at once and for ever, adrift from commerce, and to devote himself entirely to study. His father now gave up all hopes of him and unwillingly consented to the change, but only upon condition that his son should apply himself to the study of the canon law. It has been asserted that the professor under whom he placed himself, and whose lectures he

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attended for near six years, was the celebrated Cino di Pistoia: and this has been attempted to be proved by a letter which Doni asserts to have been written by Boccaccio to that famous lawyer. Mazzuchelli, however, proves that this letter was fabricated by Doni; and further that Cino, who taught the civil law and not the canon law, died in 1336, when Boccaccio, then but twenty years of age, was employed in his mercantile pursuits. At all events, the attempt to make him a doctor of canon law was attended with little success; and his father, dying in 1348, left him master of his own inclinations.

After remaining some time at Florence, he returned to Naples, and having turned his inheritance into money, travelled to Sicily, Venice, and other parts in search of manuscripts to aid him in the composition of his prose and verse works, the *Decameron* and the *Teseide*. In the course of his travels he frequented universities and libraries, studying Greek under Leontius Pilatus of Thessalonica, and astronomy under Andalus de Nigro. Manuscripts were at that time particularly costly, and our author's

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means were soon exhausted; transcribing became therefore his only resource, and this practice—the best of all for fixing details in the memory—served to increase his learning, and even enabled him to add to his resources. By dint of patience and unremitting application to study, Boccaccio became not only one of the most elegant writers but one of the most learned men of his time, a fact to which his works on mythology, history, and geography bear ample witness.

Succeeding years found him employed in several very honourable embassies, on behalf of the Republic. About the year 1346 he was sent into Romagna, and to Ostasio the sovereign of Ravenna. The preface to the *Decameron* proves that in 1348 he was at Florence, or at least in the country in its vicinity, where he resided during the plague. At the end of 1351 the Florentines sent him to Louis, Marquis of Brandenburg, to solicit him to come into Italy for the purpose of opposing the power of the Counts of Milan. This embassy had not the success which was expected; and on the report that the Emperor Charles IV. intended to pass into

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Italy, Boccaccio was sent by his countrymen to Avignon, with the object of concerting with Innocent VI. the reception which should be given to that pontiff. He was sent twice to Urban V., in 1365 and 1367, upon affairs of state. In 1373, the Florentines determined to appoint a lecturer to explain the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, and Boccaccio was chosen for this important and honourable office, with the annual stipend of one hundred florins. But, of all his missions, the most pleasing to him was that of repairing to Padua, to communicate to Petrarch the solemn revocation of the sentence of exile passed on the poet's father during the factions of 1302; and to inform him that the Florentines, proud of such a countryman, having redeemed his paternal property, earnestly invited him to dwell in his own land, and confer honour on its then rising university. Though much affected by this honourable reparation, Petrarch did not at the time comply with their request.

About 1361, a singular circumstance wrought a total change in Boccaccio's feelings and mode of life. A Carthusian monk

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came to him one day, and stated that Father Petronius of Siena, a monk of that order, who had died not long before in the odour of sanctity, had commissioned him to exhort Boccaccio to forsake his profane studies, reform his life, and prepare for death. To prove the truth of his mission, he revealed several secrets, known only to Boccaccio and Petrarch, to neither of whom the monks were personally known. Terrified at this mysterious communication, Boccaccio wrote to Petrarch, expressing his resolution to comply with the advice, and to shut himself up in a Carthusian cloister. In Petrarch's answer, which may be found among his Latin epistles, he tells his friend that though this disclosure of secrets, supposed to be unknown to any living soul, appears a mystery, yet "there is such a thing as artifice in imposture which may at times assume the language of supernatural inspiration; that those who practise arts of this kind examine attentively the age, the aspect, the looks, the habits of the man they mean to delude, his theories, his motions, his voice, his conversation, his feelings and opinions, and from all these derive their

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oracles." He adds, that as to the prediction of approaching death, there is no occasion for a message from the next world to say that a man past the middle age, and infirm of body, cannot expect to have many years of life; and, in conclusion, advises his friend to tranquillise his imagination, and to avail himself of the warning in leading a more regular life; retaining at the same time his liberty, his house, and his library, and making a good use even of the heathen authors in the latter, as many holy men, and the Fathers of the Church themselves, had done before him. This letter induced Boccaccio to give up his intention of retiring from the world, and to content himself with assuming the ecclesiastical dress; and being admitted to the first grade of holy orders, he adopted a regular and studious course of life, turning his attention wholly to the study of the Scriptures.

The explanation of this monkish visitation is neither difficult nor far to seek. It will be found in the *Decameron* itself, that storehouse of caustic attacks upon friars and monks, whose dissolute habits are therein held up to popular derision, and whose

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pernicious influence upon society could not fail to be weakened by so complete an exposure of their frauds. When these masterpieces of brilliant narrative began to be talked of, Europe was emerging from a condition of abject and utter ignorance. For centuries, the materials of learning had been firmly held by the ecclesiastics, who used them for strengthening old errors and confirming the old superstitions which were so profitable to the Church. As Buckle says:* "There were not in all Europe during the Dark Ages more than three or four men who dared to think for themselves, and even they were obliged to veil their meaning in obscure and mystical language. The few who were able to read confined their studies to the Legends of the Saints and the Homilies of the Fathers, from which sources were drawn the fables of which the theology of that time is principally composed. These miserable stories were widely circulated, and were valued as solid and important truths. The more such literature was read, the more the stories were believed: in other words,

* *History of Civilisation*, chap. iv.

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the greater the learning, the greater the ignorance."

Under such circumstances, the *Decameron* must have fallen upon the ecclesiastical party of that day like a veritable thunderbolt. Boccaccio was a *raconteur* of the first order; his stories — some founded upon facts coming within his own knowledge, others derived from his intimate acquaintance with the tales brought from the East by learned Greeks who, being driven from Constantinople in the fourteenth century, took refuge in Italy—are models of skilful composition and purity of diction, and he seems to have carried the vulgar tongue directly to perfection with a power hitherto unfelt by the people, even at the hands of Dante. By Boccaccio's magic touch, the rude and undigested materials of the troubadours become refined and elaborated; wit and humour everywhere abound; and although his amorous intrigues, disappointments, and enjoyments are perhaps too broadly narrated, yet there are episodes full of pathos, some of which (such as those of Ginevra and Griseldis) have furnished subjects for poetry of the highest order.

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In a word, his narrative is clear, free from metaphors and repetition, avoiding monotony, and keeping the attention fully engaged without tiring the reader.

It is not to be lightly assumed, because Boccaccio ridiculed the monks and introduced these people into situations at once ludicrous and humiliating, that he was personally a sceptic or heretic; on the contrary, his romances abound with pious invocations of heaven and the saints, and his attacks are made, not upon the clergy generally, but upon hypocrites who assume the garb of religion the better to carry on their schemes of long-planned seduction, breaches of hospitality, and betrayals of unlucky husbands. If he introduces certain classes of the clergy as engaged in such licentious pursuits, he follows the example of the heads of the Church, who, despising the mendicant friars and being heartily jealous of the monks, spoke of them in terms nearly as opprobrious as any that Boccaccio has employed. Leo the Tenth, his secretary, Cardinal Bembo, and Berni, the secretary to several cardinals, were unsparing in their sarcasms

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upon them; and when we find expression of the same feeling of contempt and hatred indelibly portrayed in wood and stone composing the fabric of our English churches (as witness the *misereres* and bosses of Beverley Minster, &c.), it is not to be wondered at that laymen should take similar liberties, seeing that a friar had come to be regarded, as Ugo Foscolo says, as a sort of scapegoat for the sins and peccadilloes of the whole clergy. Be this as it may, the fact remains that the Church speedily took up arms against the author and his work. As we have said, the visitation from the Carthusians was intended to awe so dangerous a writer into silence, and the suppression of his book speedily followed. Of the earliest edition—that printed by Christopher Valdarfar at Venice, 1471, folio—two copies (one only of which is perfect) are known to exist, the whole edition, with these exceptions, having been burnt in a heap in the market square of Florence, 1497, at the instance of the fanatic Savonarola. The fortunes of the unique perfect copy furnish a chapter in the romance of bibliography. It was sold at the Roxburghe

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sale to Lord Blandford for £2260, at that time the highest price ever paid for a single volume, having been originally purchased for one hundred guineas; and Dibdin has described in his stilted diction the contest between that nobleman and Earl Spencer for the coveted possession. Lord Spencer subsequently became the owner of "The Valdarfar Boccaccio," at a far less price than his former bid of £2250, and it has now found a permanent home in the city of Manchester, having been acquired, through the purchase of the Althorp Library, by Mrs. Rylands. Of the second (imperfect) copy, it will be sufficient to say that it was purchased by Mr. Bernard Quaritch at the Sunderland sale, 1881, for £585, a sum which was considered at the time to be much within its pecuniary worth, and sold by him at an advance of five per cent. upon the auction price to the late Mr. Crawford of Lakelands. At the same sale Mr. Quaritch also obtained the second edition of the *Decameron* with a date (1472) for £400, and the rare Aldine of 1522 for £111, amongst many others of greater or less rarity.

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The first complete edition in English, "containing a free rendering," was printed by I. Jaggard (the printer of the First Folio of Shakespeare), 1620, in two volumes, small folio, and is described as "The Modell of Wit, Mirth, Eloquence, and Conversation, framed in ten dayes, of an hundred curious pieces;" the influence of these stories upon English literature began, however, to be felt much earlier than the above date.

A forgotten poet, Edward Lewicke, versified the *History of Titus and Gisippus* in 1562, a single copy of whose work is all that has come down to us (sold at Bright's sale, 1845, for £26, 5s.); and the same story also occurs in Sir Thomas Elyot's *Boke named the Gouvernor*, printed by Berthelot, 1531. In 1566-7, William Painter, Clerk of the Ordinance and Armoury, published his *Palace of Pleasure* (which furnished Shakespeare and other dramatists with many subjects for their plays), the *Decameron* being one of the works upon which contributions were levied; but in 1619 the Church seems to have taken the alarm, for in that year the Archbishop of Canterbury pro-

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hibited the publication of Boccaccio's tales in English.

The general plan of the *Canterbury Tales* was, no doubt, suggested by the *Decameron*, seeing that Chaucer's later work, like that of Boccaccio, consists of a framework, or setting, contrived for the purpose of inserting tales. Thus the ten ladies and gentlemen who isolate themselves in a country house outside the walls of Florence during the prevalence of the Black Plague, and beguile the tedium of their confinement by telling each a story daily, have their counterparts in the English poem, in the thirty-two persons of both sexes bound on pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury, whose stories, going and returning, ought to have made up the number of one hundred and twenty-four (excluding the "Host of the Tabard," whose province was that of moderator or judge), had the scheme been completed. The "Clerk of Oxenford" tells the story of "Patient Grisilde," which is the last tale in the *Decameron*, and, although Chaucer says that he learned it at Padua from Francis Petrarch, there is every reason to believe

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that he must have read the story in Boccaccio before he ever saw Petrarch. For he had previously (*circa* 1364) translated several stanzas from the *Teseide* of Boccaccio in his *Assembly of Foules*, and, as he knew the one work, it is most likely that he also knew the *Decameron*, which appeared about 1352, and immediately attained a wide circulation in Italy. It must be remembered, however, that Petrarch, who highly praised the description of the plague and *Griselde*, translated the latter into Latin. Subsequent translations and editions of this celebrated work are simply innumerable.

Boccaccio died December 21, 1375, at the age of sixty-two, and was buried in the parish church of Certaldo, in which town his dwelling still exists. It is built of brick, according to the fashion of the fourteenth century, with a square turret on one side of it commanding a fine view of the surrounding hills; one of which is still called by the country people "the hill of Boccaccio," from a tradition that this was his favourite place of resort for meditation and study in the summer heats. The grove which

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crowned its summit has been cut down. A curious circumstance is said by Professor Rosellini to have happened in this house. An old woman, who tenanted the premises, was busy weaving in a small room next to the sitting apartment, when the repeated shaking of her loom brought down part of the wall, and laid open a small recess hollowed in the thickness of it, from which a large bundle of written papers tumbled down. The old woman, through ignorance or superstition, or both, thought it a pious duty to consign the whole of the MSS. to the flames. Probably many interesting autographs of Boccaccio have thus been lost.

Boccaccio wrote both in Latin and in Italian, in prose and in verse. His Latin works are now mostly forgotten, although the author evidently thought more of them than of his Italian novels. His book on mythology (*De Genealogia Deorum*, lib. xv.) was dedicated to Hugo, King of Cyprus and Jerusalem, at whose request he composed it. His other Latin works are *De Montium, Sylvarum, Lacuum, Fluviorum, Stagnorum, et Marium Nominibus*, a sort of gazetteer; *De Casibus Virorum et Fæminarum Illus-*

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trium, lib. ix.), where he eloquently relates, in the last book, the tragic catastrophe of the unfortunate Templars who were executed at Paris in 1310-14, at which his father was present; *De Claris Mulieribus Opus*; and lastly, sixteen *Eclogæ*, amounting to about three thousand lines, which were published with those of Petrarch and others at Florence in 1504. Boccaccio left a key to the real personages of these eclogues in a long letter written to Father Martin of Signa. Both he and Petrarch allude in these poems to the vices and corruptions of the Papal Court.

The other Italian works of this author scarcely concern us. His *Il Filocopo*, a prose romance, written at the request of Fiammetta, is a dull composition, far inferior to the *Decameron* in style, and displaying an anomalous mixture of Christian and Pagan images and sentiments; *L'Amorosa Fiammetta* is also a prose romance, in which the lady relates her passion and grief for the absence of Pamfilo, by which name the author is supposed to have designated himself; *Il Corbaccio*, or the "Labyrinth of Love," in which he relates his

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adventures with a certain widow identical probably with the lady whom he has introduced in the seventh tale of the eighth day of the *Decameron*; *Ameto*, a drama of mixed prose and verse; *Origine, Vita, e Costumi di Dante Alighieri*, is the outcome of the lectures upon the life and works of Dante already mentioned. Several letters remain, but the bulk of his correspondence is lost. A life of Petrarch by Boccaccio, written originally in Latin, was published in 1828 by Domenico Rossetti, of Trieste.

Boccaccio wrote a quantity of Italian verses of which he himself thought little, after seeing those of Petrarch; and posterity has confirmed his judgment. His *Teseide*, a heroic poem, in *ottava rima*, may be excepted. This metre, generally adopted by the Italian epic and romantic poets, he has the credit of having invented. Though imperfect, and little attractive as an epic poem, the *Teseide* is not destitute of minor beauties. Chaucer is indebted to it for his *Knight's Tale*, remodelled by Dryden under the name of *Palamon and Arcite*; and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, a play which was first printed in 1634 with the names

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of Fletcher and W. Shakespeare upon the title-page as its joint authors, has the same origin. It would be unprofitable to multiply instances which in these days of research are known to most readers.

ALFRED WALLIS, F.R.S.L.

EXETER, *August* 1895.

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- Three young gentlemen lavish away their fortunes, and a nephew of theirs, returning home in as desperate a condition, falls in company with an Abbot, whom he afterwards finds to be the King of England's daughter, who marries him, and makes good his uncles' losses, re-settling them in their former prosperity* 141

NOVEL IV

- Londolfo Ruffolo, falling into poverty, became a pirate, and was taken by Genoese, and suffered shipwreck,*

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<i>but saved himself upon a cask of jewels, and was taken out of the sea by a woman at Corfu, and afterwards returned home very rich . . .</i>	156

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NOVEL VI

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SYNOPSIS OF PERSONS AND SUBJECTS

DAY I

Wherein each of the company speaks on whatever topic is most agreeable to the narrator.

PAMPINEA, Queen—who relates the following Novels: I., 10; II., 3; III., 2; IV., 2; V., 6; VI., 2; VII., 6; VIII., 7; IX., 7; X., 7.

DAY II

Wherein are discussed the accidents that befall those on whom Fortune frowns, but who nevertheless find at last a happy ending to their troubles.

FILOMENA, Queen—who relates the following Novels: I., 3; II., 9; III., 3; IV., 5; V., 8; VI., 1; VII., 7; VIII., 6; IX., 1; X., 8.

DAY III

Wherein are told the stories of such as have with difficulty attained their desired end, or recovered what was lost.

NEIFILE, Queen—who relates the following Novels: I., 2; II., 1; III., 9; IV., 8; V., 5; VI., 4; VII., 8; VIII., 1; IX., 4; X., 1.

DAY IV

Wherein are narrated the stories of those whose love affairs have had ill success.

FILOSTRATO, King—who relates the following Novels: I., 7; II., 2; III., 1; IV., 9; V., 4; VI., 7; VII., 2; VIII., 5; IX., 3; X., 3.

DAY V

Wherein is set forth the happiness to which lovers have arrived after many troublous adventures.

FIAMMETTA, Queen—who relates the following Novels: I., 5; II., 5; III., 6; IV., 1; V., 9; VI., 6; VII., 5; VIII., 8; IX., 5; X., 6.

SYNOPSIS

DAY VI

Wherein is told the fortunate result of a pleasant repartee, and how by a witty and timely reply shame or danger has been averted.

ELISA, Queen—who relates the following Novels: I., 9; II., 8; III., 5; IV., 4; V., 3; VI., 9; VII., 3; VIII., 3; IX., 2; X., 2.

DAY VII

Wherein are recited tricks put by wives upon their husbands, either through love or for the avoidance of some scandal, whether in an open or concealed manner.

DIONEIO, King—who relates the following Novels: I., 4; and the last Novel of each succeeding Day.

DAY VIII

Wherein are told the deceptions practised by women upon men, by men upon women, or by one man upon another.

LAURETTA, Queen—who relates the following Novels: I., 8; II., 4; III., 8; IV., 3; V., 7; VI., 3; VII., 4; VIII., 9; IX., 8; X., 4.

DAY IX

Wherein each chooses whatever subject is most agreeable to the speaker.

EMILIA, Queen—who relates the following Novels: I., 6; II., 6; III., 7; IV., 7; V., 2; VI., 8; VII., 1; VIII., 4; IX., 9; X., 5.

DAY X

Wherein are given the stories of those who through friendship or other good motive have displayed a liberal or magnanimous disposition.

PAMFILO, King—who relates the following Novels: I., 1; II., 7; III., 4; IV., 6; V., 1; VI., 5; VII., 9; VIII., 2; IX., 6; X., 9.

THE DECAMERON

*PROEM**

TO pity the afflicted is a sentiment proper to humanity, and, though becoming to all men, those who have heretofore stood in need of compassion, and found it in others, are more particularly bound to the exercise of this virtue. Amongst whom, if there were ever a notable instance, I reckon mine own, seeing that from my youth upward I was possessed with an ardent affection, set upon a high and noble object—higher perhaps than suited one of my low condition,

* In the original this preface is preceded by the following title: "Here beginneth the book called Decameron, sur-named Prencipe Galeotto, wherein are contained one hundred novels, told in ten days by seven ladies and three gentlemen."

THE DECAMERON

though I was praised therefor by discreet persons who had knowledge of the matter. Nevertheless, it was no light affliction—not that I would accuse the lady of cruelty, but because of the exceeding ardour of a passion not under due control, from which I often suffered trouble and pain, without being able to find any solace or contentment. My affairs being in this posture, the amusing and consolatory converse of a friend gave me such ease that I verily believe I was in this manner saved from death. However, it pleased Him who, being eternal, brings to end all mundane things, that my fervent desire, which no force of deliberation, of counsel, of open shame, or of future peril could ever bend or break, decreased of itself by lapse of time, in such sort as only to leave in my mind that settled content which Love grants to those who venture not too far into his deeps; and now only pleasing images remain in my memory. But, though sorrow has departed,

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I still bear in mind the kindness then shown me, nor shall I forget it while I live; and, since gratitude for benefits received is a virtue highly to be praised—as the contrary is to be blamed—in order that I may not appear ungrateful, I have resolved (now that I may hold myself free) to do in return what lies in my power to bestow some comfort—I will not say on such as have comforted me, for perhaps through their own good sense or good fortune they want it not—but to such as are in need; and this consolation, small enough truly, I feel bound to offer where greatest necessity prevails. Who, then, will deny that in this case the ladies should have the preference over the other sex? They, being shame-faced and timid, hide all these things within their hearts; and how much more oppressive they are as they are less exhibited, let those say who have tried the experiment, and who have surrendered their will and desires at the command of fathers, mothers,

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brothers, husbands, living always within the narrow circuit of their chambers, where being compelled to sit idle, thinking now of one thing, now of another, they frame divers imaginations, but few of an agreeable sort. If in the minds of such dames there spring up a melancholy bred of amorous desire, it must necessarily take deep root, if it be not displaced by novelty and gaiety. We must acknowledge, too, that the fair sex are less able than men to sustain trouble, as we can see in the instance of many men, unhappy in their love affairs, but who, nevertheless, find a thousand ways of otherwise occupying their minds and dismissing melancholy thoughts. So that they are not in such evil case but that they can go and come as necessity calls them, hear and see many things, hunt, play at games, buy and sell—each of which pursuits draws one from meditation on his own ills. At the worst, in some space of time, consolation prevails or the grief de-

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clines. Therefore, that I may make amends for Fortune's shortcomings, seeing she is most sparing of her aid to those who most require it—namely, the weaker sex—I intend, by way of succour to ladies who have been wounded by Cupid (for others the needle and spinning-wheel suffice), to relate a hundred novels, fables, parables, or histories—howsoever they may be styled—recited in the course of ten days, in a company of seven ladies and three gentlemen, during the period of the late deadly pestilence, together with sundry pleasant ballads sung by the said ladies. Wherein will be found many love adventures and strange accidents that happened in these and former ages; whence those ladies who read may derive pleasure and profit, learning therefrom what to avoid and what to follow. If it fall out as I pray it may, let them render thanks to Love, who, in delivering me from his bonds, hath enabled me to offer them an agreeable present.





DAY I. INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE LADIES

WHENEVER I reflect how disposed you are by nature to compassion, I cannot help being apprehensive lest what I now offer to your acceptance should seem to have but a melancholy beginning. For it calls to mind the remembrance of that most fatal plague, so terrible yet in the memories of us all, an account of which is in the front of this book. But be not frightened too soon, as if you expected to meet with nothing else. This beginning, disagreeable as it is, is as a rugged and steep mountain placed before a delightful valley, which appears more beautiful and pleasant as the way to it was more difficult ; for, as joy usually ends with sorrow, so again the end of sorrow is joy. To this short fatigue (I call it short, because contained in few words) immediately succeed the mirth and pleasure I had before

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promised you; and which, but for that promise, you would scarcely expect to find. And in truth, could I have brought you by any other way than this, I would gladly have done it; but, as the occasion of the occurrences of which I am going to treat could not well be made out without such a relation, I am forced to use this Introduction.

In the year then of our Lord 1348, there happened at Florence, the finest city in all Italy, a most terrible plague; which, whether owing to the influence of the planets, or that it was sent from God as a just punishment for our sins, had broken out some years before in the Levant; and after passing from place to place, and making incredible havoc all the way, had now reached westward to the above-named city, where, spite of all the means that art and human foresight could suggest, as keeping the city clear from filth, and excluding all suspected persons; notwithstanding frequent consultations what else was to be done, nor omitting prayers to God in frequent processions, in the spring of the foregoing year it began to show itself in a sad and wonderful manner;

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and, different from what it had been in the East, where bleeding from the nose is the fatal prognostic, here there appeared certain tumours in the groin or under the arm-pits, some as big as a small apple, others as an egg; and afterwards purple spots in most parts of the body; in some cases large and but few in number, in others less and more numerous, both sorts the usual harbingers of death. To the cure of this malady, neither medical knowledge, nor the power of drugs, was of any effect; whether because the disease was in its own nature mortal, or that the physicians (the number of whom, taking quacks and women pretenders into the account, was grown very great) could form no just idea of the cause, nor consequently ground a true method of cure — whichever was the reason, few or none escaped, but they generally died the third day from the first appearance of the symptoms, without a fever or other bad circumstance attending. And the disease, by being communicated from the sick to the well, seemed daily to get ahead, and to rage the more, as fire will do, by laying on fresh combustibles. Nor was it caught only by

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conversing with or coming near the sick, but even by touching their clothes, or anything that they had before touched. It is wonderful, what I am going to mention; which had I not seen it with my own eyes, and were there not many witnesses to attest it besides myself, I should never venture to relate, however credibly I might have been informed about it;—such, I say, was the quality of the pestilential matter as to pass not only from man to man, but, what is more strange, and has been often known, that anything belonging to the infected, if touched by any other creature, would certainly infect and even kill that creature in a short space of time. And one instance of this kind I took particular notice of; namely, that the rags of a poor man just dead, being thrown into the street, and two hogs coming by at the same time, and rooting amongst them, and shaking them about in their mouths, in less than an hour turned round, and died on the spot. These accidents, and others of a like sort, occasioned various fears and devices amongst those people that survived, all tending to the same uncharitable and cruel end; which

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was, to avoid the sick, and everything that had been near them, expecting by that means to save themselves. And some, holding it best to live temperately, and to avoid excesses of all kinds, made parties, and shut themselves up from the rest of the world ; eating and drinking moderately of the best, and diverting themselves with music, and such other entertainments as they might have within doors ; never listening to anything from without, to make them uneasy. Others maintained free living to be a better preservative, and would baulk no passion or appetite they wished to gratify, drinking and revelling incessantly from tavern to tavern, or in private houses, which were frequently found deserted by the owners, and therefore common to every one ; yet avoiding, with all this irregularity, to come near the infected. And such, at that time, was the public distress, that the laws, human and divine, were not regarded ; for the officers who should have put them in force being either dead, sick, or in want of persons to assist them, every one did just as he pleased. A third sort of people chose a method between these two ; not confining

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themselves to rules of diet like the former, and yet avoiding the intemperance of the latter, but eating and drinking what their appetites required; and, instead of shutting themselves up, they walked everywhere, with odours and nosegays to smell to, as holding it best to corroborate the brain, for they supposed the whole atmosphere to be tainted with the stink of dead bodies, arising partly from the distemper itself, and partly from the fermenting of the medicines within them. Others of a more cruel disposition, as perhaps the more safe to themselves, declared that the only remedy was to avoid it: persuaded, therefore, of this, and taking care for themselves only, men and women in great numbers left the city, their houses, relations, and effects, and fled into the country; as if the wrath of God had been restrained to visit those only within the walls of the city, or else concluding that none ought to stay in a place thus doomed to destruction. Divided as they were, neither did all die nor all escape; but falling sick indifferently, as well those of one as of another opinion, they who first set the example by forsaking others now lan-

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guished themselves without mercy. I pass over the little regard that citizens and relations showed to each other; for their terror was such that a brother even fled from his brother, a wife from her husband, and, what is more uncommon, a mother from her own child. On which account numbers that fell sick could have no help but what the charity of friends, who were very few, or the avarice of servants supplied; and even these were scarce, and at extravagant wages, and so little used to the business that they were fit only to reach what was called for, and observe when their employers died; and their desire of getting money often cost them their lives.

From this desertion of friends, and scarcity of servants, an unheard-of custom prevailed: no lady, however young or handsome, would disdain being attended by a man-servant, whether young or old it mattered not, and to expose herself naked to him, the necessity of the distemper requiring it, as though it were to a woman; which might make those who recovered less modest for the time to come. And many lost their lives, who might have escaped, had they been looked after at

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all. So that, between the scarcity of servants and violence of the distemper, such numbers were continually dying as made it terrible to hear as well as to behold. Whence, from mere necessity, many customs were introduced, different from what had been before known in the city. It had been usual, as it now is, for the women who were friends and neighbours to the deceased to meet together at his house, and to lament with his relations; at the same time the men would get together at the door, with a number of clergy, according to the person's circumstances; and the corpse was carried by people of his own rank, with the solemnity of tapers and singing, to that church where the person had desired to be buried; which custom was now laid aside, and, so far from having a crowd of women to lament over them, great numbers passed out of the world without a single person present, and few had the tears of their friends at their departure; but those friends would laugh, and make themselves merry, for even the women had learned to postpone every other concern to that of their own lives. Nor was a corpse attended by more than ten or a

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dozen, nor those citizens of credit, but fellows hired for the purpose, who would put themselves under the bier, and carry it with all possible haste to the nearest church; and the corpse was interred without any great ceremony, where they could find room.

With regard to the lower sort, and many of a middling rank, the scene was still more affecting; for they staying at home, either through poverty or hopes of succour in distress, fell sick daily by thousands, and, having nobody to attend them, generally died; some breathed their last in the streets, and others shut up in their own houses, in which case the stench that came from them made the first discovery of their deaths to the neighbourhood. And, indeed, every place was filled with the dead. A method now was taken, as well out of regard to the living as pity for the dead, for the neighbours, assisted by what porters they could meet with, to clear all the houses, and lay the bodies at the doors; and every morning great numbers might be seen brought out in this manner, from whence they were carried away on biers or tables, two or

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three at a time ; and sometimes it has happened that a wife and her husband, two or three brothers, and a father and son, have been laid on together : it has been observed also, whilst two or three priests have walked before a corpse with their crucifix, that two or three sets of porters have fallen in with them ; and, where they knew but of one, they have buried six, eight, or more : nor was there any to follow, and shed a few tears over them ; for things were come to that pass, that men's lives were no more regarded than the lives of so many beasts. Hence it plainly appeared that what the wisest, in the ordinary course of things, and by a common train of calamities, could never be taught,—namely, to bear them patiently,—this, by the excess of those calamities, was now grown a familiar lesson to the most simple and unthinking. The consecrated ground no longer containing the numbers which were continually brought thither, especially as they were desirous of laying every one in the parts allotted to their families, they were forced to dig trenches, and to put them in by hundreds, piling them up in rows, as goods

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are stowed in a ship, and throwing in a little earth till they were filled to the top. Not to rake any farther into the particulars of our misery, I shall observe that it fared no better with the adjacent country ; for to omit the different castles about us, which presented the same view in miniature with the city, you might see the poor distressed labourers, with their families, without either the help of physicians or care of servants, languishing on the highways, in the fields, and in their own houses, and dying rather like cattle than human creatures ; and growing dissolute in their manners like the citizens, and careless of everything, as supposing every day to be their last, their thoughts were not so much employed how to improve, as to make use of their substance for their present support : whence it happened that the flocks and herds, and the dogs themselves, ever faithful to their masters, being driven from their own homes, would wander, no regard being had to them, among the forsaken harvest ; and many times, after they had filled themselves in the day, would return of their own accord like rational creatures at night. What can

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I say more, if I return to the city?—unless that such was the cruelty of Heaven, and perhaps of men, that between March and July following, it is supposed, and made pretty certain, that upwards of a hundred thousand souls perished in the city only; whereas, before that calamity, it was not supposed to have contained so many inhabitants. What magnificent dwellings, what noble palaces were then depopulated to the last person! what families extinct! what riches and vast possessions left, and no known heir to inherit! what numbers of both sexes in the prime and vigour of youth—whom in the morning neither Galen, Hippocrates, nor Æsculapius himself, but would have declared in perfect health—after dining heartily with their friends here, have supped with their departed friends in the other world!

But I am weary of recounting our late miseries; therefore, passing by everything that I can well omit, I shall only observe that, the city being left almost without inhabitants, it happened one Tuesday in the morning, as I was informed by persons of good credit, that seven ladies all in deep

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mourning, as most proper for that time, had been attending divine service (being the whole congregation) in the Church of Santa Maria Novella : who, as united by the ties either of friendship or relation, and of suitable years,—the youngest not less than eighteen, nor the eldest exceeding twenty-eight,—so were they all discreet, nobly descended, and perfectly accomplished, both in person and behaviour. I do not mention their names, lest they should be displeased with some things said to have passed in conversation, there being a greater restraint on those diversions now ; nor would I give a handle to ill-natured persons who carp at everything that is praiseworthy, to detract in any way from their modesty by injurious reflections. And that I may relate therefore all that occurred without confusion, I shall affix names to every one, bearing some resemblance to the quality of the person. The eldest then I call Pampinea, the next to her Fiammetta, the third Filomena, the fourth Emilia, the fifth Lauretta, the sixth Neifile, and the youngest Elisa ; who being got together, by chance rather than any appointment, into a corner of the church,

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and there seated in a ring, and leaving off their devotions, and falling into some discourse together concerning the nature of the times, in a little while Pampinea thus began :

“ My dear girls, you have often heard, as well as I, that no one is injured where we only make an honest use of our own reason ; now reason tells us that we are to preserve our lives by all possible means, and, in some cases, at the expense of the lives of others. And if the laws, which regard the good of the community, allow this, may not we much rather (and all that mean honestly as we do), without giving offence to any, use the means now in our power for our own preservation ? Every moment when I think of what has passed to-day, and every day, I perceive, as you may also, that we are all in pain for ourselves. Nor do I wonder at this ; but much rather, as we are women, do I wonder that none of us should look out for a remedy, where we have so much reason to be afraid. We stay here for no other purpose, that I can see, but to observe what numbers come to be buried, or to listen if the monks, who are now reduced to a very

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few, sing their services at the proper times, or else to show by our habits the greatness of our distress. And, if we go from hence, we are saluted with numbers of the dead and sick carried along the streets, or with persons who had been outlawed for their villanies, now facing it out publicly, in defiance of the laws ; or we see the scum of the city enriched with the public calamity, and insulting us with reproachful ballads. Nor is anything talked of, but that such an one is dead or dying ; and, were any left to mourn, we should hear nothing but lamentations. Or, if we go home—I know not whether it fares with you as with myself—when I find out of a numerous family not one left besides a maid-servant, I am frightened out of my senses ; and, go where I will, the ghosts of the departed seem always before my eyes ; not like the persons whilst they were living, but assuming a ghastly and dreadful aspect. Therefore the case is the same, whether we stay here, depart hence, or go home ; especially as there are few left who are able to go, and have a place to go to, but ourselves. And those few, I am told, fall into all sorts of de-

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bauchery ; and even the religious and ladies shut up in monasteries, supposing themselves entitled to equal liberties with others, are as bad as the worst. And, if this be so (as you see plainly it is), what do we here ? What are we dreaming of ? Why less regardful of our lives than other people of theirs ? Are we of less value to ourselves, or are our souls and bodies more firmly united, and so in less danger of dissolution ? 'Tis monstrous to think in such a manner ; so many of both sexes dying of this distemper in the very prime of their youth affords us an undeniable argument to the contrary. Wherefore, lest through our own wilfulness or neglect this calamity, which might have been prevented, should befall us, I should think it best (and I hope you will join with me) for us to quit the town, and avoiding, as we would death itself, the bad example of others, to choose some place of retirement, of which every one of us has more than one, where we may make ourselves innocently merry, without offering the least violence to the dictates of reason and our own consciences. There will our ears be entertained with the warbling of the birds,

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and our eyes with the verdure of the hills and valleys ; with the waving of corn-fields like the sea itself ; with trees of a thousand different kinds, and a more open and serene sky, which, however overcast, yet affords a far more agreeable prospect than these desolate walls. The air also is pleasanter, and there is greater plenty of everything, attended with fewer inconveniences ; for, though people die there as well as here, yet we shall have fewer such objects before us, as the inhabitants are less in number ; and on the other part, if I judge right, we desert nobody, but are rather ourselves forsaken. For all our friends, either by death, or endeavouring to avoid it, have left us, as if we in no way belonged to them. As no blame then can ensue by following this advice, and perhaps sickness and death by not doing so, I would have us take our maids, and everything we may be supposed to want, and to remove every day to a different place, taking all the diversions in the meantime which the seasons will permit ; and there continue, unless death should interpose, till we see what end Providence designs for these things. And this I remind

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you of, that our character will stand as fair by our going away reputably as the characters of others will do who stay at home with discredit."

The ladies, having heard what Pampinea had to offer, not only approved of it, but were going to concert measures for their departure, when Filomena, who was a most discreet person, made answer: "Though Pampinea has spoken well, yet there is no occasion to run head over head into it, as you are about to do. We are but women, nor is any of us so ignorant not to know how little able we shall be to conduct such an affair, without some man to help us. We are naturally fickle, obstinate, suspicious, and fearful; and I doubt much, unless we take somebody into our scheme to manage it for us, lest it soon be at an end, and perhaps little to our reputation. Let us provide against this, therefore, before we begin."

Elisa then replied: "It is true, man is the head of a woman, and without his management it seldom happens that any undertaking of ours succeeds well. But how are these men to be come at? We

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all know that the greater part of our male acquaintance are dead, and the rest all dispersed abroad, avoiding what we seek to avoid, and without our knowing where to find them. And to take strangers with us would not be altogether so proper; for, whilst we have regard to our health, we should so contrive matters that, wherever we go to repose and divert ourselves, no scandal may ensue from it."

Whilst this was debated, behold, three young gentlemen came into the church (and yet the youngest was not less than twenty-five years of age), in whom neither the adversity of the times, the loss of relations and friends, nor even fear for themselves, could stifle, or indeed cool, the passion of love. One was called Pamfilo, the second Filostrato, and the third Dioneo, all of them well bred, and pleasant companions; and who, to divert themselves in this time of affliction, were then in pursuit of their mistresses, who by chance were three of these seven ladies, and the other four all related to one or other of them. These gentlemen were no sooner within view, but the ladies immediately had their eyes upon them; and

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Pampinea said, with a smile, "See, fortune is with us, and has thrown in our way three prudent and worthy gentlemen, who will conduct and wait upon us, if we think fit to accept of their service." Neifile, with a blush, because she was one that had an admirer, answered: "Take care what you say; I know them all indeed to be persons of character, and fit to be trusted, even in affairs of more consequence, and in better company; but, as some of them are enamoured of certain ladies here, I am only concerned lest we be drawn into some scrape or scandal, without either our fault or theirs." Filomena replied: "Never tell me, so long as I know myself to be virtuous, what other people may think; God and the truth will be my defence; and, if they be willing to go, we will say with Pampinea that fortune is with us." The rest, hearing her speak in this manner, gave consent that they should be called, and invited to partake in this expedition. And, without more words, Pampinea—related to one of the three—rose up, and made towards them, who were standing at a distance, attentive to what passed, and, after a cheerful salu-

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tation, acquainted them with their design, and entreated that they would, out of pure friendship, oblige them with their company. The gentlemen at first took it all for a jest; but, being assured to the contrary, immediately answered that they were ready; and, to lose no time, gave the necessary orders for what they would have done.

Everything being thus prepared, and a messenger despatched before, whither they intended to go, the next morning, which was Wednesday, by break of day, the ladies, with some of their women, and the gentlemen, with every one his servant, set out from the city, and, after they had travelled two short miles, came to the place appointed. It was a little eminence, remote from any great road, covered with trees and plants of an agreeable verdure; on the top of which was a stately palace, with a grand and beautiful court in the middle; within were galleries, and fine apartments elegantly fitted up, and adorned with most curious paintings; around it were fine meadows and most delightful gardens, with fountains of the purest and best water. The vaults

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also were stored with the richest wines, suited rather to the taste of epicures than of modest and virtuous ladies. This palace they found cleared out, and everything set in order for their reception, with the rooms all graced with the flowers of the season, to their great satisfaction.

Being seated, Dioneo, who was the pleasantest of them all, and full of words, began: "Your wisdom it is, ladies, rather than any foresight of ours, which has brought us hither. I know not how you have disposed of your cares; as for mine, I left them all behind me when I came from home. Either prepare, then, to be as merry as myself (I mean with decorum), or give me leave to go back again, and resume my cares where I left them." To whom Pampinea, as if she had disposed of hers in like manner, answered: "You say right, sir, we will be merry; we fled from our troubles for no other reason. But, as extremes are never likely to last, I who first proposed the means by which such an agreeable set of company is now got together, and being desirous to make our mirth of some continuance, find there is a necessity for our ap-

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pointing a principal, whom we should honour and obey in all things as our head, whose province it shall be to regulate our diversions. And that every one may make trial of the burthen which attends care, as well as the pleasure which there is in superiority, nor therefore envy what he hath not yet tried, I hold it best that every one should experience both the trouble and the honour for one day: the first to be elected by us all, and who, on the approach of the evening, shall name a person to succeed for the following day; each, during the time of government, giving orders concerning the place where, and the manner how, we are to live." These words gave a general satisfaction, and they named Pampinea, with one consent, for the first day; whilst Filomena, running to a laurel tree, as having often heard how much that tree had always been esteemed, and what honour was conferred on those who were deservedly crowned with it, made a garland, and put it upon her head, which, whilst the company continued together, was hereafter to be the ensign of sovereignty.

Pampinea, thus elected queen, enjoined

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silence, and having summoned the gentlemen's servants, and their own women, who were four in number, before her : " To give you the first example," said she, " how, by proceeding from good to better, we may live orderly and pleasantly, and continue together, without the least reproach, as long as we please, in the first place I declare Parmeno, Dioneo's servant, master of my household, and to him I commit the care of my family, and everything relating to my hall; Sirisco, Pamfilo's servant, I appoint my treasurer, and to be under the direction of Parmeno; and Tindaro I command to wait on Filostrato and the other two gentlemen, whilst their servants are thus employed. Misia, my woman, and Licisca, Filomena's, I order into the kitchen, there to get ready what shall be provided by Parmeno. To Chimera, Lauretta's, and Stratilia, Fiammetta's maid, I give the care of the ladies' chambers, and to keep the room clean where we sit. And I will and command you all, on pain of my displeasure, that wherever you go, or whatever you hear and see, you bring no news here but what is good." These orders were approved by them all;

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and she, rising from her seat, with a good deal of gaiety, added, "Here are gardens and meadows, where you may divert yourselves till nine o'clock, when I shall expect you back, that we may dine in the cool of the day."

The company were now at liberty, and the gentlemen and ladies took a pleasant walk in the garden, talking over a thousand merry things by the way, and diverting themselves there by singing love-songs and weaving garlands of flowers, and returned at the time appointed, when they found Parmeno busy in the execution of his office: for in a saloon below was the table set forth, covered with the neatest linen, with glasses reflecting a lustre like silver; and having washed their hands, Parmeno, by the queen's order, desired them to sit down. The dishes now were served up in the most elegant manner, and the best wines brought in, the servants waiting all the time with the most profound silence; and, being well pleased with their entertainment, they dined with all the facetiousness and mirth imaginable. When dinner was over, as they could all dance, and some both play and sing well,

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the queen ordered in the musical instruments, and, commanding Dioneo to take a lute and Fiammetta a viol, they struck up a dance, and the queen, with the rest of the company, took an agreeable turn or two, whilst the servants were sent to dinner: when the dance was ended they began to sing, and continued till the queen thought it time to seek repose. Her permission being given, the gentlemen retired to their chambers, remote from the ladies' lodging-rooms, and the ladies did the same, and, having undressed themselves, lay down to rest.

Shortly after noontide the queen arose, and ordered all to be called, alleging that much sleep in the day-time was unwholesome; and they went into a meadow of deep grass, where the sun had little power; and, having the benefit of a pleasant breeze, they sat down in a circle, as the queen had commanded, who spoke in this manner: "As the sun is high, and the heat excessive, and nothing is to be heard but the chirping of the grasshoppers among the olives, it would be madness for us to think of moving yet. This is an airy place, and here are chess-boards and gammon-tables

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to divert yourselves with ; but, if you are ruled by me, you will not play at all, since it often makes one party uneasy, without any great pleasure to the other or to the looker-on ; but let us begin and tell stories, and in this manner one person will entertain the whole company ; and by the time it has gone round the hottest part of the day will be over, and then we can divert ourselves as we like best. If this be agreeable to you, then—for I wait to know your pleasure—let us begin ; if not, you are at your own disposal till the evening.” This motion was approved by all ; whilst the queen continued, “ Let every one for this first day take what subject he fancies most ; ” and turning to Pamfilo, who sat on her right hand, bade him begin ; who, in ready obedience to her commands, and being heard attentively, spoke to this effect.

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Chappelet imposes upon the priest by a sham confession, and dies ; and, although a very wicked fellow, was afterwards reputed a saint, and called Saint Chappelet.

LADIES, it is most meet and right that everything we do should be begun in the name of Him who is the Maker of all things. Therefore, as I am to entertain you first, I shall make choice of a very extraordinary instance, which may direct us to place all our hopes in Him, as the only unchangeable being, and evermore to praise Him. Certain it is that all earthly things are transitory and mortal, attended with great troubles and subject to infinite dangers, which we who live embroiled with them, and are even part of them, could neither endure nor find a remedy for, were it not for the especial

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grace of God that enables us ; which blessing we are not to expect through our own merits, but His goodness, and the intercession of those saints who, having been once mortal men like ourselves, and done His will whilst on earth, now enjoy happiness and immortality in heaven ; to whom, as to fit agents, informed of our frailties by their own experience, and not daring, perhaps, immediately to address ourselves to so great a Judge, we offer up our prayers for what we want. And we find His mercy the greater, as, not being able to pry into the secrets of His divine will, we may sometimes choose, as mediator before Him, one who is banished eternally from His presence ; and yet He from whom nothing is hidden, having regard to the purity of the suppliant, rather than to his ignorance, or the situation of the person to whom he applies himself, hears those who pray in this manner as if that person were really a saint : which will most plainly appear from the following story ; I say most plainly, not considering the judgment of God, but that of man.

There lived in France a person whose

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name was Musciat; who, from a wealthy merchant, became a courtier, and went into Tuscany with Charles, surnamed Sansterre, brother to the King of France, who was instigated to that expedition by Pope Boniface. This gentleman, finding his affairs considerably perplexed, and lying, as is usual to persons in trade, in abundance of hands; nor being able to right them himself, without a good deal of time and trouble, resolved to entrust them with several people; and settled everything to his mind, excepting some debts which were standing out from persons living in Burgundy. The reason was, he had found them to be a set of perverse, ill-conditioned, rascally fellows, and he could not for his life conceive where a man might be met with bad enough to match them: after much thinking about it, he at last called to mind one Ciapperello da Prato, who used to come much to his house at Paris; and being a little pragmatical fellow, the French, not knowing the meaning of his true name, but thinking him to have been called Cappello, gave him the diminutive name of Ciappelletto, or Chappelet, by which he was generally known there.

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Now the character of the man was this: Being by trade a scrivener, he was really ashamed if any writings of his (he did not draw many indeed) were found without some fault, or flaw; and would do that sort of work for nothing with more pleasure than a just thing that he was to be well paid for. He was glad at all times of being a false witness, whether it was required of him or not: and as great regard was had to an oath in France, he, who made no scruple to forswear himself on every occasion, was sure of every cause that depended on his single testimony. To foment quarrels and disputes was his utmost pleasure, especially amongst friends or relations; and the more mischief he occasioned, the greater was his satisfaction. Was a man to be despatched at any time; he was the person to undertake it, and would do it with his own hands. He was a great blasphemer of God and His saints, swearing and cursing on every occasion. He went to church at no time, but spoke always of the holy sacraments in the same abominable terms as he would do of the vilest things in the world; on the contrary, he was eternally at taverns, and

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places of bad repute. Of women he was as fond as a dog is of a stick; but to unnatural vice, no wretch so abandoned as himself. He would pilfer and steal with as much conscience as others give to charity. He was a glutton and drunkard to the ruin of his constitution. He was also a most notorious gamester, making use always of false dice. And, to sum up his character in few words, perhaps his equal in wickedness has not yet been born. Yet, bad as he was, he had all along been screened by the favour and interest of Musciat, as well from the resentment of private persons, whom he had often injured, as from that of the court, to which he gave daily provocation.

This man coming into Musciat's thoughts at last, who was no stranger to every part of his life, he concluded him to be such an one as the tempers of the people he had to deal with required; and sending for him, he addressed him thus:

"Master Chappelet, you know that I am about to leave this country, and as I have affairs to settle with some people of Burgundy, who are full of quirks and deceit, I do not know any one that I can employ so

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fit to manage them as yourself: you have a good deal of spare time, and if you will undertake it, I will procure you recommendatory letters from court, and allow you a reasonable part of what you recover."

Chappelet, who found himself much embarrassed in the world, and likely to be more so when his great friend was gone, without hesitating at all about it, answered that he was willing. They agreed upon terms; Musciat gave him a deputation, and procuring him the letters he had promised, he set out for Burgundy; where, being quite a stranger, he endeavoured, contrary to his former manner, to do the business he came about by fair means, reserving a different behaviour to the last. He lodged with two brothers of Florence, who were usurers; and they entertained him well on Musciat's account; and falling sick there, they had physicians to him, and servants to attend him; nor was anything omitted that could be of service, but all in vain; for this worthy good man, who was advanced in years, and had been also an irregular liver, grew worse and worse in the judgment of the physicians; so that he

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was looked upon as a dead man ; at which the brothers were greatly concerned. And one day being near the chamber where he lay, they began to have some talk together about it ; and one said to the other, " What shall we do with this fellow ? We have a fine affair upon our hands, by means of his wickedness. For to turn him out in this condition would afford matter for reproach, and also be a proof of our want of understanding ; the people seeing us receive him before into our house, and supply him with physic, and all things necessary ; and now send him out whilst he is dying, without his having been able to do anything that we ought to be offended at. And, on the other hand, he has been such a vile fellow always that he will never be brought to confess, and to receive the sacraments of the Church ; and, should he die without them, no church will receive his body ; but he must be put into the ground like a dog. Or should he confess, his sins will appear so enormous that the like were never known : nor can any priest be found that will give him absolution, and without that he must still be thrown into a ditch ; and, should this

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happen, the people of this country, who think ours an iniquitous trade, and are daily reviling us, would be apt to raise a mutiny, and declare publicly that they will no longer bear with these Lombards, these extortionate villains, whom the Church disdains to receive into her bosom; and make that a pretence to plunder us of all we are worth, and abuse our persons in the bargain; so that it will be bad for us on all sides, should this man die."

Chappelet, who, as I observed, lay not far off, heard all this, as sick people are often quick of hearing, and calling them to him he said: "I would have you be in no doubts or fears of harm to yourselves on my account. I have heard what you have been talking about, and am confident the thing would happen as you say, were everything to be as you suppose; but I will take care that it shall happen otherwise: I have been guilty of so much wickedness in my life-time that to add one sin at my death will not make the sum much greater: therefore send out for the most able and religious priest you know of, if a religious one can be found, and I will take such care of your

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affairs, as well as of my own, that you shall have reason to be satisfied."

The brothers expected no great matters from this ; but went however to a convent, and desired that some learned and holy person would come and take the confession of a Lombard who was sick in their house. Accordingly, a venerable old friar, of great sanctity and learning, and much revered by the whole city, was ordered to go with them ; who being come into the room, and seated by the sick man's bed-side, began, after some heavenly consolations, to inquire of him how long it was since he had last confessed.

To whom Chappelet, who had never confessed in his whole life, answered : " Holy father, it has been usual with me always to confess once a week at least, and sometimes oftener ; but it is true, since I have been sick, my affliction has been such that I have not confessed at all."

The friar replied : " Son, it is well, thus you should always do ; and I perceive, as you have confessed so often, that I shall have but little trouble, either in hearing or asking you questions."

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“Good father, do not say so,” cried Chappelet : “I have never so often confessed, but that I would always mention every sin that I could recollect from the hour I was born. Therefore I beg you would examine me as particularly as if I had never confessed at all ; and do not regard my languishing condition ; for I had much rather do what may disoblige the flesh, than, by consulting the ease of my body, bring damnation on my soul, which my Saviour has purchased with His most precious blood.”

The good old man was ravished with these expressions, esteeming them proofs of a well-disposed mind ; and, having commended his piety, he asked him whether he had ever offended God by the knowledge of women.

To whom Chappelet, fetching a deep sigh, replied : “I am ashamed to speak the truth, lest I should be thought to offend by vanity.”

“Speak out boldly,” said the priest, “for there can be no harm in telling truth, whether at confession or any other time.”

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"Since you make me easy in this," quoth Chappelet, "I will speak out; I am as pure, in that respect, as when I first came into the world."

"God bless you, my son," said the friar, "you have done well; and this is so much the more meritorious, as you have liberties far beyond us of doing otherwise." And he added, "But were you never given to gluttony?"

Chappelet answered with a groan: "Yes, very often; for besides fasting in Lent, as all devout persons do, I have accustomed myself to live three days in a week at least on bread and water; and I have drunk the water sometimes, especially if I have been fatigued with praying, or performing a pilgrimage, with as much pleasure as drunkards drink wine; and sometimes I have wished for salads, and have eat my bread with more pleasure than a person ought who fasts out of devotion."

"My son," replied the friar, "these are very natural and trivial crimes, and I would not have you burthen your conscience more than is necessary: all men, be they never so holy, eat with a good appetite after

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fasting, and drink with pleasure when they have been fatigued."

"Do not tell me these things to comfort me only," said Chappelet; "you know I cannot be ignorant that whatever relates to the service of God should be done sincerely and with a good will, otherwise we are guilty of sin."

"I am well satisfied," returned the friar, "in your being of that opinion, and much approve the purity of your conscience: but tell me, have you not been guilty of the sin of covetousness, desiring more than was fit, or detaining what was not your due?"

"I would not have you think so," said Chappelet, "because you see me in the house with these usurers: I have no concern with them, but came purely to persuade them to leave off that abominable way of living; and believe I might have prevailed, had it not pleased God to visit me in this manner. My father left me a plentiful fortune, and I immediately disposed of the greater part of it to religious uses; and betook myself to trade for a maintenance, and to have it in my power to relieve the poor in Christ: I cannot say indeed that

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I have not been desirous of gain; but I always gave half to the poor, and kept the other part for my own necessary occasions; and God hath so far blessed me, that my affairs have always prospered."

"You have done well," said the confessor; "but have you not been often transported with anger and passion?"

"Very often, truly!" answered the penitent; "but who can forbear, seeing the common degeneracy of mankind, who are every day breaking the commandments of God, and are not kept in awe by His judgments? I could rather choose to be out of the world than to see youth run after vanity, swear and forswear, haunt taverns, neglect going to church, and follow the ways of the world before those of God."

"My son," said the friar, "passion here is commendable; nor shall I enjoin you any penance for it: but have you been at no time transported by rage to murder, or to use indecent expressions, or to do any other injury?"

"Alas, sir!" answered Chappelet, "how can you, who appear to be so good a man, mention any such thing! Do you believe,

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had I ever entertained such thoughts, that God would have suffered me to live? These are the actions of robbers and villains, whom I never look upon without offering up a prayer to God for their conversion."

"God bless thee again, my dear child," said the good old man; "but have you never borne false witness against, or spoken ill of another, or taken away that from him which properly belonged to him?"

"Yes, reverend father," answered he, "I must needs confess I have spoken ill of another, for I had once a neighbour who used to beat his wife without cause, and I gave him a bad character to her parents; so much did I pity the poor woman, who was always ill-treated by him, as often as he got drunk."

"But," said the friar, "you tell me you have been a merchant; did you never cheat any person, as is common for them to do?"

"Yes, in good truth, sir," he replied, "but I know only of one person, who having brought the money for a piece of cloth which I had sold him, I put it into a bag without counting it, and at the month's end, when

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I came to tell it over, I found fourpence too much ; but as I was not able to find the owner again, after keeping it a year, I gave it to the poor."

"This is a mere trifle," said the friar, "and you did well to dispose of it in that manner."

He then put some other questions to him, which Chappelet answered as he had done the rest ; and just as he was proceeding to absolution, Chappelet cried out, "There is another thing hangs upon me, which I have not confessed."

The priest inquired what that was ; and he answered, "I remember once making my maid clean the house on a holiday ; and I have not showed that regard for the Lord's day which I ought."

"Oh !" said the friar, "that is a small matter, my son."

"Do not call it so, dear father," quoth the other ; "Sunday is a day much to be revered, being the day on which our Lord rose from the dead."

"Then," said the priest, "is there anything more ?"

"Yes," answered he ; "I remember, once

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in my life, to have spit in the house of God."

The friar smiled, and said, "My son, that is not to be regarded; we ourselves spit there every day."

"And you are much to blame for it," returned he, "for nothing should be kept so clean as the temple of God, where we offer sacrifice." In short, he told him many more things of that kind, and at last, as he could weep when he pleased, he fell groaning and sobbing, as though he would burst his very heart.

"Son, what is the matter?" said the friar.

He answered, "Alas, sir! there is one sin left behind, which I could never endure to confess, the shame to mention it is so great, and which, as often as I recollect, I lament in the manner you now see; nay, I am convinced that God will never forgive it."

"Go, go, my son," quoth the friar; "what is that you say? I tell you, that if all the wickedness that ever was committed by man, or can be committed whilst the world endures, were to be amassed in one person,

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if that person was thoroughly penitent, as I see you are, so great is God's mercy that upon confession it would all be forgiven him; tell me then what it is."

"Alas! father," said Chappelet, shedding abundance of tears, "my sin is so heinous that I despair altogether of pardon, unless you assist me, and move God by your prayers."

"Speak out, then," said the friar, "and I promise to intercede for you."

Chappelet yet kept weeping, and would say nothing, the priest exhorting him all the while to clear his conscience; and, after he had held him some time in suspense, he fetched a deep sigh and said, "Since you have promised to pray for me, I will disclose it: you must know then, that when I was a child I once cursed my mother;" and here he began to lament afresh in a most grievous manner.

"My good son," said the friar, "does this seem so great a sin? Men are cursing God every day, yet He pardons them upon repentance; and do you think you shall never be forgiven? Weep not; but let this be your comfort, that though you had even a hand in nailing Christ upon the cross, yet

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would that sin be forgiven on such a repentance as yours."

"What do you say?" quoth Chappelet; "what! to curse my dearest mother, who bore me day and night in her womb for nine months, and suckled me many hundreds of times at her breast! No, the sin is so great, that I must inevitably perish, unless your prayers prevent it."

The friar, finding he had no more to say, absolved and gave him his benediction; and, supposing that he spoke truth all the while, thought him the most pious man living. And, indeed, who could think otherwise, having it all from a dying man? He afterwards said to him, "Monsieur Chappelet, by God's assistance you will soon recover; but if it should please the Almighty to take your blessed and well-disposed soul unto Himself, will you give leave for your body to be buried in our convent?"

"I would have it laid nowhere else," answered he, "both because you have promised to pray for me, and as I have always had a great regard for your order. Therefore, when you go home I beg you would take care that the real body of our Lord,

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which was consecrated at your altar this morning, may be brought to me; for, unworthy as I am, I intend, with your leave, to receive it, and after that extreme unction; so that, though I have been a great sinner all my life, I may die at least like a Christian."

The holy man was much pleased, and told him that he said well, and promised that it should be brought that day; and so it was.

The brothers, being not a little suspicious that he intended to impose upon them, had posted themselves behind a partition of the room, where they heard all that passed; insomuch that they could scarcely refrain from laughing, and said one to the other, "What a strange fellow this is, whom neither age, sickness, fear of death, which is at hand, nor of God, at whose tribunal he must shortly appear, are sufficient to deter from his wicked courses, or to prevent his dying as he has always lived!" But as he had obtained burial in the church by that means, they cared no farther.

He then received the sacrament, and growing worse and worse had extreme

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unction, and died the evening that he had made this extraordinary confession. The brothers took immediate care that he should be honourably interred, and sent forthwith to the convent to desire they would come, as was usual, and perform vigils and matins for the deceased : and the priest to whom he had confessed went upon this notice to the prior, and had a chapter called, when he informed them how holy a person Chapelet was, as he could easily perceive by his confession ; and, hoping that God would work many miracles by him, he persuaded them to receive his body with all due reverence and devotion ; to which the prior and the credulous brotherhood all consented, and that night they came in a body to the place where the corpse lay, and sung the great and solemn vigils ; and in the morning they all went in their hoods and surplices, with books in their hands, and the cross carried before them, for the body, singing all the way ; and they brought it with the utmost solemnity to their church, being followed by the whole city ; and, having set it down there, the good confessor mounted the pulpit, and told them

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wonderful things concerning his life, fastings, chastity, simplicity, innocence, and sanctity ; speaking more particularly of that great crime which he had confessed with so much concern as scarcely to be persuaded that God would forgive him. And from thence he took occasion to reprimand his audience in this manner : “ Yet you, wicked as you are, make no scruple to curse God, the holy mother of God, and all the host of heaven, for the least trifle.” He flourished much concerning his truth and purity ; and worked so far upon them by his discourse, to which all yielded an implicit faith, that when the service was ended they pressed forward to kiss the deceased’s hands and feet ; and the funeral clothes were immediately rent to pieces, every one thinking himself happy who could get a single rag. All that day he was kept, so that every one might see and visit him ; and at night most honourably interred in a marble sepulchre : and on the following day was a great procession of devout persons, to worship at his shrine with lighted tapers, and to offer the waxen images which they had vowed. And such was the fame of his sanctity, and

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the people's devotion towards him, that nobody in time of trouble would apply themselves to any other saint but him, calling him Saint Chappellet, and affirming that God had wrought many miracles by him, and still continued to work for such as recommended themselves devoutly to him.

Thus lived and died Master Ciapperello da Prato, and became a saint as you have heard, of whom I will not say but he may be happy; for, though his whole life could not be worse, it is not impossible but, before the hour of his death, he might be such a penitent that God should have mercy on him, and receive him into His kingdom. But as this we know nothing of, we have much more reason, from what appears, to conclude that he is more likely in the hands of the devil in perdition than amongst the angels in Paradise. And, if it be so, great is God's mercy towards us who, not regarding our errors, but the purity of our intention, whenever we make choice of an improper mediator hears us as well as if we had applied ourselves to one truly a saint. And therefore, that His grace may preserve

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us in our present calamity, and in this cheerful and agreeable society, let us praise His name, as we first began ; recommending ourselves to Him in time of need, with a full assurance of being always heard.

NOVEL II

Abraham the Jew, at the instigation of Jean-not de Chevigny, goes to the court of Rome, and seeing the wickedness of the clergy there, returns to Paris, and becomes a Christian.

SOME parts of Pamfilo's story made them laugh heartily ; and the whole was much commended by the ladies, who had been very attentive ; and, as it was now ended, the queen ordered Neifile, in the next seat to him, to go on in the method she had prescribed, who, being as affable in behaviour as her person was beautiful, very cheerfully answered that she was willing, and began in this manner :—

Pamfilo has showed us, in his novel, the great goodness of God in not regarding any errors of ours which proceed from the blindness and imperfection of our nature. And I intend to set forth in mine, how the same goodness of God (by bearing with the



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vices of those persons who, though they ought to give testimony both in their words and actions concerning it, yet do the reverse) displays itself in the most plain and evident manner ; whence we may be taught more steadily to persevere in what we believe.

At Paris there lived, as I have been told, a great merchant, and a worthy person, called Jeannot de Chevigny, a dealer in silk, and an intimate friend to a certain rich Jew, whose name was Abraham, a merchant also, and a very honest man ; and Jeannot, being no stranger to his good and upright intentions, was greatly troubled that the soul of so wise and well-meaning a person should perish through his unbelief. He began, therefore, in the most friendly manner, to entreat him to renounce the errors of Judaism, and embrace the truth of Christianity, which he might plainly see, as the most wise and holy institution, daily to gain ground, and flourish more and more, whereas his religion was dwindling to nothing. The Jew answered that he esteemed no religion like his own ; that he was born in it, and in it he intended to live and die ; nor

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could anything make him alter his resolution. Notwithstanding this, Jeannot began, in a few days, with the same arguments over again, setting forth, in as awkward a manner as a merchant must be supposed to do, for what reasons our religion ought to be preferred: and though the Jew was well read in the Hebrew law, yet, whether it was his regard to the man, or that Jeannot had the Spirit of God upon his tongue, he began to be greatly pleased with his arguments; but continued obstinate, nevertheless, in his opinion, nor would suffer himself to be converted. Jeannot continued his most earnest solicitations, insomuch that the Jew, overcome at last by them, said: "I perceive, Jeannot, you are very desirous I should become a Christian; I am willing to do as you would have me, but first I have a mind to go to Rome, to see him whom you call God's Vicar on earth, and to consider his ways a little, and those of his brother cardinals; and if they appear in such a light to me that I may be able to comprehend by them, and by what you have said, that your religion is better than mine, as you would persuade me, I will then do as I said;

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otherwise I will continue a Jew as I am." When Jeannot heard this he was much troubled, and said to himself: "I have lost all my labour, which I thought well bestowed, expecting to have converted this man; for should he go to Rome, and see the wickedness of the clergy there, so far from turning Christian, were he a Christian, he would certainly become a Jew." Then applying himself to Abraham, he said: "Alas! my friend, why should you be at the great trouble and expense of such a journey? Not to mention the dangers, both by sea and land, to which so rich a person as yourself must be exposed, do you think to find nobody here that can baptize you? Or, if you have any doubts and scruples, where will you meet with more able persons than are here to clear them up for you, and to answer such questions as you shall put to them? You may suppose the prelates to be like what you see in France; but more perfect indeed, as they are nearer to the principal pastor. Then let me advise you to save this journey against another time, when you may want some pardon or indulgence, and probably

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then I may bear you company." The Jew answered, "I believe it is as you say ; but, to make short of the matter, I am fully resolved, if you would have me to do what you have so much solicited, to go thither else I will in no wise comply." Jeannot seeing him determined, said, "God be with you!" and, supposing that he would never be a Christian after he had seen Rome, gave him over for lost.

The Jew took horse, and made the best of his way to Rome, where he was most honourably received by his brethren the Jews ; and, without saying a word of what he was come about, he began to inspect narrowly into the manner of living of the Pope, the cardinals, and other prelates, and of the whole court ; and, from what he himself perceived, being a person quick of sight, and as he was informed by others, he found that, from the highest to the lowest, they were given to all sorts of lewdness, without the least shame or remorse ; so that the only way to obtain anything considerable was, by applying to harlots and to those who practised odious vices. He observed, also, that they were generally

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drunkards and gluttons, and, like brutes, more solicitous about their bellies than anything else. Inquiring farther, he found them all such lovers of money, that they would not only buy and sell man's blood in general, but even the blood of Christians, and sacred things, of what kind soever, whether benefices or pertaining to the altar; and they drove as great a trade of this as there is in selling cloth and other commodities at Paris; that to palpable simony they had given the plausible name of procuration, and debaucheries they called sustentation of the body; as if God had been unacquainted with their wicked intentions, and, like men, was to be imposed upon by the names of things. These, and other things which I shall pass over, gave great offence to the Jew, who was a sober and modest person; and now, concluding he had seen enough, he returned home.

As soon as Jeannot heard of his arrival, he went to see him, thinking of nothing so little as his conversion; and they received one another with a great deal of pleasure; and in a day or two, after he had recovered from his fatigue, Jeannot began to inquire

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of him what he thought of the Holy Father, the cardinals, and the rest of the court. To whom the Jew immediately answered: "To me it seems as if God were much kinder to them than they deserve; for if I may be allowed to judge, I must be bold to tell you that I have seen neither sanctity, devotion, nor anything good in the clergy of Rome; but, on the contrary, luxury, avarice, gluttony, and worse than these, if worse things can be, are so much in fashion with all sorts of people, that I should rather esteem the court of Rome to be a forge, if you allow the expression, for diabolical operations than things divine; and for what I can perceive, your pastor, and consequently the rest, strive with their whole might and skill to overthrow the Christian religion, and to drive it from off the face of the earth, even where they ought to be its chief succour and support. But as I do not see this come to pass, which they so earnestly aim at—on the contrary, that your religion gains strength, and becomes every day more glorious—I plainly perceive the Spirit of God to be the protector of it, as the most true and holy of all others. For which

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reason, though I continued obstinate to your exhortations, nor would suffer myself to be converted by them, now I declare to you that I will no longer defer being made a Christian. Let us go then to the church, and do you take care that I be baptized according to the manner of your holy faith."

Jeannot, who expected a quite different conclusion, was the most overjoyed man that could be; and taking him to Notre-Dame de Paris, he requested the priests there to baptize Abraham; and they, finding that it was his desire, immediately performed it; Jeannot, being his sponsor, gave him the name of Jean. He afterwards took care to have him well instructed in our faith, in which he made a speedy proficiency, and became, in time, a great and good man.

NOVEL III

Melchizedech, a Jew, by a story of three rings, escapes a most dangerous snare, which Saladin had prepared for him.

THIS novel was universally applauded, whereupon, at the queen's desire, Filomena thus began:—

Neifile's story puts me in mind of what happened to a certain Jew; for, as enough has been said concerning God and the truth of our religion, it will not be amiss if we descend to the actions of men. I proceed, therefore, to the relation of a thing which may make you more cautious for the time to come, in answering questions that shall be put to you. For you must know, that, as a man's folly often brings him down from the most exalted state of life to the greatest misery, so shall his good sense secure him in the midst of the utmost danger, and procure him a safe and honourable repose.



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There are many instances of people being reduced by their foolishness, which I choose to omit, as they happen daily; but what great cause for comfort a person's good understanding may at some times afford I shall make appear, as I promised, in the following short novel.

Saladin was so brave and great a man, that he had raised himself from an inconsiderable person to be Sultan of Babylon, and had gained many victories over both the Saracen and Christian princes. This monarch having in divers wars, and by many extraordinary expenses, run through all his treasure, some urgent occasion fell out, that he wanted a large sum of money. Not knowing which way he might raise enough to answer his necessities, he at last called to mind a rich Jew of Alexandria, named Melchizedech, who lent out money on interest. Him he believed to have wherewithal to serve him; but then he was so covetous that he would never do it willingly, and he was unwilling to force him. But as necessity has no law, after much thinking which way the matter might best be effected, he at last resolved to use force under some

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colour of reason. He therefore sent for and received him in a most gracious manner, and making him sit down, he thus addressed him: "Honest man, I hear from divers persons that thou art very wise, and knowing in religious matters; wherefore I would gladly know from thee which religion thou judgest to be the true one—the Jewish, the Mahometan, or the Christian?" The Jew (truly a wise man) found that Saladin had a mind to trap him; and perceiving that he must gain his point should he prefer any one religion, after considering a little how best to avoid the snare, his invention at last supplied him with the following answer:—

"The question which your highness has proposed is very curious; and, that I may give you my sentiments, I must beg leave to tell a short story. I remember often to have heard of a great and rich man, who, among his most rare and precious jewels, had a ring of exceeding great beauty and value; and being proud of possessing a thing of such worth, and desirous that it should continue for ever in his family, he declared, by will, that to whichsoever of his sons he should give this ring, him he designed for

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his heir, and that he should be respected as the head of the family. That son to whom the ring was given made the same law with respect to his descendants, and the ring passed from one to another in a long succession, till it came to a person who had three sons, all virtuous and dutiful to their father, and all equally beloved by him. And the young men, knowing what depended upon the ring, and ambitious of superiority, began to entreat their father, who was now growing old, every one for himself, that he would give the ring to him. The good man, equally fond of all, was at a loss which to prefer; and as he had promised all, and being willing to satisfy all, privately got an artist to make two others, which were so like the first that he himself scarcely knew the true one, and at his death gave one privately to each of his sons. They afterwards all claimed the honour and estate, each disputing them with his brothers, and producing his ring; and the rings were found so much alike that the true one could not be distinguished. To law then they went, which should succeed, nor is that yet decided. And thus it has happened, my lord, with regard to the three

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laws given by God the Father to the three peoples concerning which you proposed your question : every one believes he is the true heir of God, has His law, and obeys His commandments ; but which is in the right is uncertain in like manner as of the rings."

Saladin perceived that Melchizedech had escaped the net which was spread for him : he therefore resolved to discover his necessity to him, to see if he would lend him money, telling him at the same time what he designed to have done, had not his discreet answer prevented him. The Jew freely supplied him with what he wanted ; Saladin afterwards paid him with a great deal of honour, made him large presents, besides maintaining him nobly at his court, and was his friend as long as he lived.





DAY I: NOVEL IV.

NOVEL IV

A Monk having committed an offence, for which he ought to have been severely punished, saves himself by wittily proving his Abbot guilty of the very same fault.

THUS ended Filomena, when Dioneo, who sat next to her (without waiting the queen's order, as knowing that he was to follow in course), spoke as follows :—

If I understand you aright, gracious ladies, we are assembled here to amuse ourselves by telling stories ; whilst nothing, then, is done contrary to this intention, I suppose every one has liberty to relate what he thinks will be most entertaining. Therefore, having heard how, by the pious admonitions of Jeannot de Chevigny, Abraham the Jew was advised to his soul's salvation ; and also how Melchizedech, by his good sense, saved his wealth from the designs of Saladin ; I shall, without

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fear of reproof, show, in few words, how cunningly a monk saved his bones from the punishment intended him.

There was once, in the territories of Lunigiana, a monastery, better stored both with monks and religion than many are now-a-days, to which belonged a young monk, whose constitution neither fasting nor praying could humble. Now it happened one day, early in the morning, whilst his brethren were all asleep, that, taking a walk about their church, which stood in a lonesome place, he cast his eye upon a pretty girl, a farmer's daughter, who was gathering herbs, and immediately felt a strong temptation, ill suiting with his profession; and drawing near, he entered into discourse with her, and prevailed upon her to go to his cell with him, before anybody was stirring abroad to see them; where, whilst they were diverting themselves together, it happened that the abbot, being just awake, and passing by the door, thought he heard something of a noise within; and laying his ear to listen, could distinguish a woman's voice. At first he was inclined to order the door to be opened,

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but he afterwards thought of a different method, and returned to his chamber to wait till the monk came out. The latter, though he was pleased with his companion, could not help being a little suspicious of a discovery, and imagining that he heard somebody treading at the door, he peeped through a crevice, and saw the abbot standing to listen; and knowing that he was detected, and should be soundly punished, he became very uneasy. Yet, without showing anything of it to the girl, he was contriving how to get clear of the affair; and he hit on a stratagem which succeeded to his heart's desire. Pretending that he could stay no longer—"I must go," he cried, "and will contrive a way to get you off without being seen; lie still, then, till I return." He now locked the door after him, and carried the key to the abbot, as is usual when they stir out of the monastery, and putting a good face on the matter, he said, "Reverend father, I could not get all my wood home this morning, and if you please I will go now and fetch the remainder." The abbot, willing to make a more perfect discovery, took the key, and gave leave.

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No sooner had the other departed, but he began to consider what he had best do in this case; whether to open the door in presence of all the monks, that so, the offence being known to all, they could have no room to murmur when he proceeded to punishment; or whether he should not rather inquire of the damsel herself how she had been brought thither. Supposing, also, that she might be a person's wife or daughter whom he would not have disgraced in that public manner, he thought it best to see first who she was, and then come to some resolution. So stepping privately to the chamber, he went in, and locked the door after him. The girl, on seeing him, was in great confusion, and fell a-weeping; whilst our abbot, finding her to be young and handsome, was seized (old as he was) with the same desires as the young monk had felt, and began to reason thus with himself: "Why should I not take a little pleasure when I may have it? for of plague and trouble I know enough every day. She is handsome, too. Nobody can ever know it. If I can persuade her, why should I not? Discovery is impossible,

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and a hidden sin is half pardoned. Such another offer may never fall in my way, and I hold it best to take it whilst I can have it." Upon this, his purpose in going thither being quite changed, he went nearer, and began to comfort her, desiring her not to weep; and making some farther advances, acquainted her, at last, with his intention; and she, who was made neither of flint nor steel, easily complied with the abbot's wish; whereupon he embraced and kissed her, and being, as became his office, a somewhat ponderous person, out of tenderness to the girl, chose a rather unusual mode of achieving his aim.

The monk, who, under pretence of going to the wood, had concealed himself in the dormitory, on seeing the abbot go alone to his chamber, promised himself success; but when he saw him lock the door he thought it past all doubt; and, coming from the place where he lay hid, he heard and saw through a grating in the door all that passed between them. The abbot, after he had stayed some time, locked the door again, and returned to his chamber; and supposing the monk to be now come from

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the wood, he resolved to reprimand and imprison him, that so the girl might remain solely to himself; and causing him to be sent for, he gave him a severe rebuke, and ordered him to prison. The monk answered, very readily, "Good sir, I have not been so long of the Benedictine order as to be acquainted with all the particularities thereto belonging: your reverence instructed me well in the observance of fasts and vigils; but you never told me how I was to behave with regard to women, or that we should place ourselves in subjection to them. But, as you have so lately set me an example, I promise, if you will forgive me, to follow it, and to do hereafter as I have seen you." The abbot being quick of apprehension, found the monk knew more than he expected, and, being ashamed to punish him for a crime of which he himself was known to be guilty, he pardoned him; and, enjoining his silence, they had the girl conveyed privately out of the monastery, whither it is believed she frequently returned.





DAY I: NOVEL V.

NOVEL V

The Marchioness of Montferrat, by an entertainment of hens, and some witty speeches, cures the King of France of his dishonourable love.

DIONEIO'S story had put all the ladies to the blush, at the very beginning; and they looked at each other with a sort of smile all the time it lasted; giving him to know by a gentle reprimand, when he had ended, that such sort of tales should not be told among women. The queen then pointed to Fiammetta, who sat next, to take her turn, who most cheerfully began in this manner:—

It is no little joy to me, to find the force of smart and witty replies so well set forth in what has already passed among us. And, as it is accounted a mark of good sense in men to aim at ladies of superior quality to themselves, so is it no less a token of the greatest discretion in women,

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to take care never to be surprised in love by men of higher degree. For which reason I shall now relate how a woman by her wit and address may ward off an attack of that kind, when there is a design upon her honour.

The Marquis of Montferrat was a person of great valour, and, being standard-bearer to the Church, was gone in a general crusade of the Christian princes against the Turks. And one day as they were discoursing of his prowess at the court of Philip, surnamed the Short-sighted, who was preparing in France for the like expedition, a courtier said, in the presence of the king, that the whole world had not so accomplished a pair as the marquis and his lady; for as much as he excelled other cavaliers in valour, so much was she superior to the rest of her sex in worth and beauty. These words so affected the king that from that very moment, though he had never seen her, he began to be passionately in love. And he resolved to go by land as far as Genoa, that he might have an honourable pretext for paying her a visit, thinking that, as the marquis

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was absent, he could not fail of accomplishing his desires. With this design, having sent the greatest part of his company before, he set forward with a small retinue, and, being come within a day's journey of the place, he sent her word that on the morrow she might expect his company at dinner. The lady very cheerfully replied that she should esteem it a singular favour, and would make him heartily welcome.

For a long while she could not conceive why so great a prince should come to see her, when her husband was from home; but supposing at last that the fame of her beauty must have drawn him thither, she resolved nevertheless, as she was of a noble spirit, to show him due respect: for which purpose she summoned the principal gentry who were left in the vicinity to consult them about what was necessary for his reception, reserving the entire management of the feast to herself. And, buying all the hens that were in the country, she ordered the cooks to get nothing else for his majesty's dinner, but to dress them all the different ways possible.

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Next day the king came, and was received by the lady with great joy, and had all due honour paid him; and finding her even exceed what had been said before in her favour, he was greatly astonished; he then retired a while into the apartments which were provided for him, to repose himself; and when dinner was ready his majesty and the lady sat down at one table, and their attendants at other tables, all placed according to their respective qualities.

Here the king was served with dishes one after another, and with the most costly wines, feasting his eyes yet more with the sight of the lady, and was extremely pleased with his entertainment. But observing at last that all the different courses, however variously cooked, were nothing but hens, he began to wonder; and though he knew that the country about was well stored with venison and wild-fowl, and he had signified his intention time enough for them to have provided both, yet, being unwilling, how great soever his surprise might be, to mention anything but concerning the hens, turning a merry countenance to the lady, he said, "Madam,

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are only hens bred in this country, and no cocks?"

The lady, who well understood the meaning of this question, now thinking that she had a fit opportunity of letting him know her sentiments, boldly answered: "Not so, my lord; but women, however they may differ in dress and titles, are the same here as in other places."

The king hearing this, immediately found out the meaning of the entertainment; as also what virtue lay couched under her answer. And being sensible that words would be spent in vain on such a lady, and force he could not use, he therefore judged it more becoming his honour to stifle his ill-conceived passion; and so without more words (as being afraid of the lady's replies), when dinner was over, that he might shadow his dishonourable coming by a hasty departure, he thanked her for the honour he had received, took his leave, and posted away to Genoa.

NOVEL VI

A plain honest man, by a jest accidentally let fall, very wittily reproves the hypocrisy of the clergy.

EMILIA, whose turn came next (the genteel reproof given by the marchioness to the king of France being approved by the whole assembly), began in this manner:—

Nor will I conceal a most severe expression made use of by an honest simple man to a most sordid and avaricious monk, which you will both commend and laugh at.

There was, not long since, in our city, a friar belonging to the Inquisition, who, though he laboured much to appear righteous and zealous for the Christian faith, yet was he a much better inquisitor after such as had full purses than those who held heterodox opinions. By which great care of his, he soon found out a person better stored with money than sense. This man,



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not so much out of profaneness as want of thought, and perhaps overheated with liquor into the bargain, unluckily said to one of his companions that he had better wine than Christ himself had ever drunk: which being reported to the inquisitor, and he understanding that the man's estate was large, and that he was full of money, sent all his myrmidons, had him seized, and commenced a process, not so much with a design of amending him in matters of faith as to ease him of part of his money, as he soon did.

The man being brought before him, he inquired whether it was true what had been alleged against him; and the poor man immediately answered that it was, and told him in what manner the words were spoken. To whom the most holy inquisitor (devoted to St. John with the golden beard) replied: "What! dost thou make Christ a drunkard, and curious in the choice of wines, like your common sots and frequenters of taverns? and now wouldst excuse it as a small matter? And so it may seem to thee; but I tell thee, should I proceed with the rigour of justice, thou wouldst be burnt

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alive for it." With these and such-like words, as if he had to do with a downright atheist, he so terrified the poor wretch that he was forced to have recourse to a little of St. John's golden grease (a most sovereign remedy against the pestilential avarice of the clergy, especially of the lesser friars, who are forbidden the use of money, although it be not mentioned by Galen in his book of medicines), with which he anointed his hands to such purpose that the fire and faggot, with which he had been threatened, were changed into a cross, which, being yellow and black, seemed like a banner designed for the Holy Land. The money being paid, he was to stay there for some time, being ordered, by way of penance, to hear mass at Santa Croce every morning, to visit him also at dinner-time, and to do nothing the rest of the day but what he commanded; all which he performed punctually.

And one morning it happened that, during mass, the gospel was read wherein were these words: "You shall receive a hundred for one, and so possess eternal life;" which he kept thoroughly in his mind, and being

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come, at dinner-time, the inquisitor asked him whether he had heard mass that morning. "Yes, sir," replied the man very readily. "Hast thou heard anything therein," quoth the inquisitor, "wherein thou art doubtful, or desirous to ask any questions?" "No, surely," said the honest man, "and believe all that I have heard most steadfastly; only one thing I remember, which occasions great pity in me for you and the rest of your brethren, as to what will become of you in the other world." "And what are those words," replied the other, "which make you pity us so much?" "Oh, good sir," said the man, "do you remember the words of the gospel, 'You shall receive a hundred for one'?" "Well, what of them?" quoth the inquisitor. "I will tell you, sir," continued he: "ever since I have been here, have I seen sometimes one, and sometimes two great cauldrons of broth given out of your great abundance every day to the poor, after you and your brethren have been sufficiently regaled; and now, if for every one of these you are to receive a hundred, you will all of you be drowned in broth!" This set the whole table a-laugh-

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ing, and the inquisitor was quite confounded, knowing it to be a satire upon their great hypocrisy; and were it not that he had been much blamed for his former prosecution, he would have given him more trouble: he ordered him, therefore, in a rage, to go about his business, and to come near him no more.





DAY I: NOVEL VII.

NOVEL VII

Bergamino, by telling a tale of a certain witty person named Primasso, very handsomely reproves the avarice which had lately appeared in Messer Cane della Scala.

THE pleasantness of Emilia and her agreeable story made them all laugh heartily, and they commended the contrivance of the cross-bearer. After which Filostrato, who was to speak next, began :—

It is a commendable thing, most worthy ladies, to hit a fixed mark ; but more so, to see a strange thing suddenly appearing, as suddenly hit by an archer. The scandalous and most wicked lives of the clergy furnish matter enough for reproach and raillery to such as are so disposed, without much thinking upon the matter ; and therefore, though the honest man did well in touching master inquisitor, by aiming at the hypocritical charity of the friars, who

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gave that to the poor which they would otherwise either throw away or give to the hogs, yet is he more to be commended of whom (the last story leading me to it) I am going to speak, who reproved Messer Cane della Scala, a most magnificent person heretofore, of a sudden and unusual kind of avarice, which had lately appeared in him, figuring by other persons in a pretty novel that which he intended to say concerning themselves, and which was as follows:—

Messer Cane della Scala was known all over the world, as well for the wealth with which fortune had blessed him, as for his being one of the greatest and most magnificent lords that had lived in Italy since the days of the Emperor Frederick II. This person had determined to make a most sumptuous feast at Verona, to which people began to flock from all parts, those especially of the best fashion; when, on a sudden, whatever was the cause, he altered his mind, and making such as came some little amends for their trouble, he sent them away. One person only remained unsatisfied, whose name was Bergamino, of

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incredible wit and parts, who was still in hopes that things would at length turn out to his advantage. But Messer Cane della Scala (having been made to understand that whatever was given to him was entirely thrown away) neither spoke to, nor took the least notice of him. Bergamino waited some days, and perceiving that no account was made of him, and finding his stock grew low with the expense of horses and servants at the inn, he became melancholy, yet resolved to wait longer, as not thinking it right to depart; and having brought three costly suits with him, which had been given him by other lords, for his more splendid appearance at this feast, the landlord beginning to grow importunate, he first pawned one, and staying a little longer, a second; and he had now begun to live upon the credit of the last, resolving, when that was spent, to go away. In the meantime it happened that he met with Messer Cane della Scala at dinner, where he presented himself before him with a sorrowful countenance; which the other observing, out of mockery rather than to take any delight in what should come from him, he said: "How

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farest thou, Bergamino? Thou seemest melancholy; what is the reason?" Bergamino, without any premeditation, yet as if he had thought long upon the matter, made a proper reply in the following story:—

"You must understand, sir, that Primasso was a person well skilled in grammar, as well as a good and ready poet, by which means he became so famous that, though his person was not universally known, his fame and character were in every one's mouth. Now, it came to pass, that being once at Paris in a poor condition, as his virtue met with no better fortune, being little encouraged by such as were the most able, he heard much talk of the abbot of Clugny, who, next to the Pope, was reputed to be the richest prelate of the Church: of him it was said that he always kept a most grand and hospitable court, and all were entertained freely that came thither, provided it was whilst the abbot was at dinner. Primasso hearing this, and being desirous of seeing great and worthy persons, resolved to be a witness of the magnificence of this abbot. He inquired, therefore, how far he dwelt from Paris. Being answered

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about six miles, he supposed that if he set out early in the morning he should be able to reach thither by dinner. Accordingly he asked the way; and having nobody to keep him company, lest he should mistake the road, and so come to a place where no victuals could be had, he took three loaves with him, depending upon finding water enough (though of that liquor a small quantity satisfied his wants) wherever he went. The loaves he put in his bosom, and he nicked his time so well that he arrived at the abbot's exactly at the hour of dining; and entering into the great hall, and beholding the number of tables which were laid forth, and the vast preparations making in the kitchens, and everything else getting ready for dinner, he said to himself, 'This man is truly as generous as he has been always reported.' Whilst he was considering these things attentively, the steward of the household ordered water to be brought, and they washed their hands and sat down every one at his respective table.

"Now it happened that Primasso was placed facing the door where the abbot was

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to make his entrance. It was the custom in this court that neither wine, bread, nor any manner of food whatever should be served to any of the tables, till the lord abbot himself was seated; whereupon the steward, having all things in readiness, acquainted his lord that nothing now was wanting but his presence. The abbot ordered the door to be thrown open; and, as he was entering the hall, the first person he chanced to cast his eyes upon was Primasso, who being a stranger as to his person, and but meanly apparelled, an ungenerous as well as an unusual thought came into his mind. 'Behold,' said he to himself, 'to whom I give my substance to be consumed!' And turning back, he ordered the door to be shut again, and inquired of the people within whether they could give any account of that poor fellow that sat over against the door: they all answered that they could not. Primasso, who had a kind of traveller's appetite, and had not been used to fast so long, seeing the abbot did not yet come, took one of the loaves out of his bosom, and began to devour it. The abbot, after he had waited a considerable time, sent one of

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his servants to see whether the fellow was gone; the servant brought word that he stayed, and was eating bread, which he seemed to have brought with him. 'Let him eat of his own,' replied the abbot, 'if he has it, for he shall taste none of mine to-day.' Gladly would the abbot have had him gone away of himself, for he did not think it right to dismiss him.

"Primasso had now finished one loaf, and finding the abbot did not yet come, he began with the second, which was again reported to his lordship, who had sent to inquire as before. At length the abbot not coming, Primasso, having eaten up his second loaf, attacked the third. When this news was carried to the abbot, he began to consider with himself in this manner: 'What strange fancy has possessed me to-day? What means this avarice, this scorn that I now show? And who is it that I thus disdain? For many years have I entertained all that would come, gentle or simple, poor or rich, and, as it has sometimes happened, the most paltry fellows imaginable; yet never before did I grudge it to any, as I now do to this person: surely

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avarice should have no influence over me in the case of a poor man. For aught I know, he may be a most extraordinary person, mean as he appears, and how unwilling soever I have hitherto been to show him respect.' Having argued thus with himself, he would needs know who he was, and finding him to be Primasso, who was come only to behold his grandeur, and knowing him to be a learned and worthy person, he became quite ashamed, and was desirous of making amends for his behaviour to him, by showing him all possible respect. And having feasted him as much as he cared for, he ordered him to be sumptuously apparelled, and putting money into his pocket, he made him a present of a horse, and left him at full liberty either to stay with him or to depart at pleasure ; wherewith Primasso, being highly satisfied, gave him his most hearty thanks, and returned to Paris on horseback, although he came thither on foot."

Messer Cane della Scala, who was a man of good understanding, without any further explanation, easily understood what Bergamino meant to say, and, smiling upon

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him, replied: "Well have you set forth your necessities and virtue, as well as my avarice; and truly I never found myself so overpowered with that vice as now in your case; but I will banish it from me with the same correction that you have taught me." So he ordered his landlord to be paid his full charges, put upon Bergamino a suit of his best clothes, gave him money in his pocket and a good horse to ride on, and left it to his own choice whether to depart or stay there with him.

NOVEL VIII

Guiglielmo Borsiere, by a few smart words, checks the miserable covetousness of Messer Ermino de' Grimaldi.

LAURETTA, who sat next to Filostrato, hearing them commend Bergamino's wit and perseverance, and knowing that it was now her turn, without waiting for any command, commenced in this manner :—

The last story puts me in mind how a worthy courtier reproached, to good purpose, the covetousness of a certain rich merchant ; which, although it may resemble the other, will not be the less agreeable, as it tended to as good an end.

There lived, not long since, at Genoa, a gentleman named Messer Ermino de' Grimaldi, who, as was generally believed, surpassed all the people of Italy in estate and wealth ; and, as no person in Italy could equal him in riches, so neither was there in



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the whole world one like him for greediness and sordid avarice. For so far was he from being a friend to others that he even denied himself common necessities, contrary to the custom of the Genoese, who delight to dress and live well. On which account he had lost his true name of Grimaldi, and was now known by no other than that of Ermino Avarizia.

It came to pass that whilst by spending nothing he went on accumulating wealth, there came to Genoa a well-bred and witty gentleman called Guiglielmo Borsiere, one nothing like the courtiers of the present day, who, to the great reproach of the debauched dispositions of such as would now be reputed fine gentlemen, should more properly style themselves asses, brought up amidst the filthiness and sink of mankind, rather than in courts. And as in former days they spent their time in making up differences between gentlemen, or in bringing about alliances by marriage, affinity, or friendship, and would divert themselves and those about them with facetious and witty repartees, and at the same time, like kind fathers, reprove and

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lash such as deserved it, although with little recompense, these upstarts of the present age employ their whole life in speaking ill of, and sowing dissensions among, their neighbours, reporting scandals and lies, and this in the presence of any one ; upbraiding one another with injuries, shame, and defamation, true or not true, upon the least occasion ; till, by their false and deceitful flatteries, they bring gentlemen at last to everything that is vile and wicked. And him we see most caressed by his untoward masters who uses the most wicked expressions and commits the vilest actions, to the eternal shame of the present world, and a demonstration that virtue is gone from among us, and hath left us wallowing in the sink of debauchery.

But to return from whence I have been led by a just resentment farther than I intended. This Guiglielmo, whom I before mentioned, was much visited and respected by the better sort of people at Genoa ; when having made some stay here, and hearing much talk of Ermino's sordidness, he became desirous of seeing him. Now Ermino had been informed of Guiglielmo's

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worthy character, and having, however covetous he was, some small sparks of gentility, he received him in a courteous manner, and entering into discourse together, he took him, and some Genoese who came along with him, to see a fine house which he had lately built; and when he had showed every part of it he said: "Pray, sir, can you, who have heard and seen so much, tell me of something that was never yet seen, to have painted in my hall?" To whom Guiglielmo, hearing him speak so simply, replied, "Sir, I can tell you of nothing which has never yet been seen, that I know of—unless it be sneezes, or something of that sort; but, if you please, I can tell you of a thing which, I believe, you never saw." Said Ermino (little expecting such an answer as he received), "I beg you would let me know what that is." Guiglielmo immediately replied, "Paint Liberality." When Ermino heard this, such a sudden shame seized him as quite changed his temper from what it had hitherto been; and he said, "Sir, I will have her painted in such a manner that neither you nor any one else shall be able

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to say hereafter that I am unacquainted with her." And from that time, such effect had Guiglielmo's words upon him, he became the most liberal and courteous gentleman, and was the most respected, both by strangers and his own citizens, of any in Genoa.





DAY I: NOVEL IX.

NOVEL IX

The King of Cyprus was so much affected by the words of a gentlewoman of Gascony, that from being a vicious prince he became very virtuous.

THE queen's last command rested on Elisa, who, without waiting for it, began in this manner:—

It often happens that much pains have been taken, and many reproofs spent, in vain upon a person, when sometimes a word thrown in by chance, and without any such design, has done the business, which appears plainly from the novel recited by Lauretta; and I purpose, also, in a very short story, to demonstrate the same. A good thing said may often be of service, and ought to be regarded, whoever the person be that reports it.

During the reign of the first King of Cyprus, after the conquest of the Holy

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Land by Godfrey of Bouillon, it happened that a gentlewoman of Gascony went on a pilgrimage to visit the Holy Sepulchre, and, on her return home, being arrived at Cyprus, she was outraged by a pack of villains, and making her complaint without receiving any redress, she resolved at length to go to the king. But she was told that she would only lose her labour, for he was so careless in every respect, and so little of a man, that, far from avenging the injuries done to others, he suffered an infinite number of the most shameful affronts offered to himself; insomuch that whoever were offended at him might vent their resentment at any time in the most opprobrious language. Which when she had heard, entirely despairing of redress, she yet proposed some comfort to herself in her calamity, to upbraid him for his meanness of spirit; and coming all in tears before him, she said, "My lord, I appear in your presence not expecting to be revenged for the injuries I have sustained; but this small satisfaction I entreat, that you would tell me how you can bear those which I hear are committed towards yourself, that I may from thence be in-

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structed patiently to bear my own, which, God knows, were it in my power, I would willingly consign to you, since you endure them so well." The king, who till that hour had been dull and inactive, as if he had been roused from a long sleep, began with avenging that lady's wrongs in the strictest manner, and from that time forward was most zealous in the punishment of every one who dared to do anything contrary to the honour of his crown.

NOVEL X

Master Alberto of Bologna puts a lady to the blush, who thought to have done as much to him, because she perceived him to be amorously inclined towards her.

AFTER Elisa had finished, the last charge remained to the queen; who, in the most becoming manner, began as follows:—

Most virtuous ladies, as the stars when the sky is clear are the ornament of heaven, and as flowers in the spring are the beauty of meadows, in like sort is an easy manner of speaking, and a facetious and pleasant discourse, set off and embellished by choice and elegant expressions, which by being short are better suited to women than men, insomuch as many words, when fewer would serve the purpose, are most disagreeable in the former. For there are few women now who understand anything that is smart and witty when they hear it; or, if they do



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understand, scarcely know how to make a reply; which is much to the disgrace of our sex. For that virtue which adorned the minds of women in former times is passed in our days into the ornaments of the body; and she whose habit is most gaudy, and set off with embroideries and fantastic ornaments, is most esteemed; not considering that, were you to load an ass with that finery, it would be able to carry more than any one of them; and therefore, in that particular, they deserve not so much respect as the ass. I am ashamed to mention these things, because, whilst I censure other women, I am taxing myself. Such showy painted things, what are they else but statues, dull and insensible? or if they answer a question, they had better have been silent. Truly, they would have you think that their not knowing how to converse with men of sense proceeds from their simplicity and purity of mind, and therefore they call their own foolishness by the name of modesty; as if there were no other honest woman but she who converses with her chambermaid, laundress, or kitchen-woman, and as if nature designed them no other kind of con-

THE DECAMERON

versation. Most sure it is that in this, as well as in other things, you are to consider when, where, and with whom you speak: for sometimes it happens that a man or woman, intending by some jest or other to put a person to the blush, without having compared their strength of wit with that of the other person, may find it recoil upon themselves. Therefore, that we may be always upon our guard, and not verify the proverb which is in every one's mouth, "That women always choose the worst," I desire that this day's last novel, which is to come from myself, may make us all wise, to the end that, as we are distinguished from others by birth and quality, we may not be behind them in discreteness of behaviour.

It is not long since a famous physician was living at Bologna (and perhaps may be so still), of extraordinary note in his profession, called Master Alberto, one of so sprightly a disposition, though he was seventy years old, that, notwithstanding his natural heat and vigour had almost forsaken him, yet disdained he not to receive the sparks of love. For having seen, at

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an entertainment, a most beautiful lady, a widow, called, as some say, Madam Malgherida de' Ghisolieri, he was no less smitten than if he had been a younger person; nor could he rest at night unless he had seen the fair face of the lady during the day. This made him pass backwards and forwards, sometimes on foot, and sometimes on horseback, so often by the door that she, and some other ladies of her acquaintance, could not help taking notice of it, and would often make themselves merry to see a person of his years and learning so ridiculously amorous, supposing love to be a passion peculiar to young people. Master Alberto continuing his marches to and fro by the house, it happened on a festival that this lady was sitting at the door with some of her friends, and, seeing him come at a distance, they all agreed to receive him handsomely, and afterwards to rally him on the affair of his love. Therefore, they rose up and invited him into a pleasant room, where he was entertained with rich wine and sweetmeats; and at length they began to inquire of him, as modestly as possible, how he could ever think of being in love

THE DECAMERON

with so fine a lady, seeing how much she had been solicited by many brisk, gay young gentlemen. Master Alberto, perceiving that they had drawn him in among them only to make a jest of him, put a merry countenance on the matter and replied:—

“Madam, it should seem no strange thing to any considerate person that I am in love, especially with you, because you so well deserve it. And, though the power be taken away by age, yet is the will remaining, as also the judgment to distinguish those who are most worthy our affection; and this in a greater degree, as age has more knowledge than youth. The hope that prompted me, who am old, to love you, who are courted by so many younger persons, is this: I have often, at an afternoon’s collation, observed ladies eating lupines and leeks, and though in the leek there be no goodness at all, yet is the head the least hurtful, as well as most agreeable to the taste; but you, guided by a wrong appetite, will generally hold the head between your fingers, and eat the stalk, which is not only good for nothing, but has also a

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bad relish. Suppose, therefore, you choose a lover in the same manner ; I shall be the happy person, and the rest of your lovers all discarded."

The lady was in some confusion, as well as her companions ; and she said to him : "Sir, you have given us a very just and reasonable reprimand : I shall always value your respect, as being a learned and worthy person ; and you may ever, as far as is consistent with my honour, command me." Master Alberto arose, gave the ladies thanks, took his leave very merrily, and departed. Thus she, never considering whom she jested with, met with her match ; of which, if you are wise, you will hereafter be careful.

The sun was now descending in the west and the heat of the day much abated, when the novels were all ended ; upon which the queen pleasantly said : "Nothing more remains to be done during my administration for the present day, but to give you a new queen to-morrow, who must take her turn, according to the best of her judgment, in ordering everything that may be necessary

THE DECAMERON

for the continuance of our mirth. And though the day ought to continue till it is night, yet, unless you take time a little beforehand, you cannot so well provide for what is to come; and, that there may be time enough to prepare whatever the queen shall think proper for the next day, I think the following days ought to begin at this hour. Having regard then to Him by whom all things live, and for our own well-doing, I appoint Filomena to be queen this second day." And when she had thus spoken she arose from her seat, and having taken the crown from her own head, she reverently placed it on Filomena's, humbly saluting her first herself, and afterwards the rest of the company did the same, submitting themselves cheerfully to her government.

Filomena saw herself crowned with a gentle blush; and calling to mind what Pampinea had just now said, that she might not seem remiss in her duty, she confirmed all the officers which Pampinea had appointed; then she ordered the morrow's provision, as also the supper, so near approaching (they being to con-

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tinue there), and afterwards spoke in this manner:—

“My dear friends, although Pampinea, more through her own courtesy than any merit of mine, has made me your queen, yet am I not disposed to follow my own judgment as to our manner of living, but rather to join my opinion with yours; and therefore, that you may know what I intend to do, and so alter it at your pleasure, I shall declare it in few words. If I have well considered the method that has been taken to-day, it seems agreeable enough, and till we either grow weary, or find it inconvenient, I resolve not to change it. Holding on, then, as we have begun, we will rise and divert ourselves a while by walking, and when the sun is down we will sup in the open air, and after we have had some songs and other diversions it will be time to go to bed; to-morrow morning, whilst it is cool and pleasant, we will rise and take a walk where we like best, and return, as we have done to-day, about dinner-time, and dance; and, after reposing ourselves as before, come here again to continue our novels, which to me seems full as entertaining as it may

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be useful. There are some things, indeed, which Pampinea could not accomplish, by reason of her late promotion, which I propose to perfect ; namely, to keep you within the bounds of some particular subject, to which your novels are all to relate, and which is to be given you beforehand, that you may have time to think of some pretty story to the purpose, which, if you please, shall be this:—As, from the beginning of the world, people have been all along conducted by fortune through the various chances of life, and will be so to the end of it, you are all of you to relate a case where a person, after going through a variety of troubles, beyond all hope and expectation at last meets with success."

They all approved the order that was given, and determined to obey it ; Dioneo only excepted, who, after the rest were silent, said : "Madam, I approve your order, as the rest have done, and think it both pleasant and commendable ; but one special favour I beg may be granted me, whilst this company continues together ; namely, not to let me be constrained by the law

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you have made to relate a story according to the given theme, unless I please, but that I may choose something I like better. And that you may not think that I request this as if I were unfurnished with discourses of this kind, I am content to be the last in every day's exercise." The queen, knowing him to be a merry companion, and well considering that he would not have moved this request but with a design to make the company laugh when they were weary of any particular subject, agreed to what he desired, with the consent of them all.

They now arose, and went to a crystal stream, which fell from a little hill into a vale shaded with trees, where, washing both their hands and their feet, much mirth passed among them, till supper drawing near made them return to the palace. When that was over, the queen ordered the musical instruments to be brought, and that Lauretta should begin a dance, Emilia singing to her, and Dioneo playing upon the lute; with which Lauretta immediately complied, and Emilia sang the following song in a very fascinating manner:—

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SONG.

I.

With my own charms so blest am I,
Each other passion I defy ;
For, ever as I gaze, I find
That good which still contents the mind ;
Nor former flame, nor future love,
The dear enjoyment can remove.

II.

Nor does the good I thus possess
Become by long admiring less ;
No—greater far's the joy I feel
Than heart can think, or tongue reveal :
How great it is, they only know
Who long have sweetly languished so.

III.

And I (the more I fix my eyes,
And feel the pleasing passion rise)
Each thought direct, and wish confine,
To make the promised blessing mine,
And hope ere long a greater joy :
Where is the nymph so blest as I ?

The song being ended, in which they all
joined—though in the minds of some the
words furnished food for thought—and after

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a few other little sonnets, a good part of the night being now spent, the queen thought proper to put an end to the first day. Lights being consequently called for, she ordered every one to their respective chambers, to repose themselves till the next morning.

THE SECOND DAY





DAY II: INTRODUCTION.

THE SECOND DAY

ALREADY had the sun ushered in the new day, the birds upon the blooming branches attesting it with their merry songs, when the ladies and gentlemen arose, and went into the garden, where they spent some time in walking, and weaving chaplets of flowers; and, as they had done the day before, after taking a repast in the open air, and dancing, they reposed themselves till a little after twelve, at which time they took their places, as the queen had appointed, in the same pleasant meadow around her. She being of a most graceful person, and having on her a crown of laurel, looked round in a most cheerful manner on the whole assembly, and then signified to Neifile that she should begin, who, without offering any excuse, spoke as follows:—

NOVEL I

Martellino, feigning himself to be a cripple, pretends to be cured by being laid upon the body of Saint Arrigo ; but, his roguery being discovered, he gets soundly beaten, and is afterwards apprehended, and in danger of being hanged, but at last escapes.

IT often happens that he who endeavours to ridicule other people, especially in things of a serious nature, becomes himself a jest, and frequently to his great cost ; as you will perceive by what, in obedience to the queen's command, I am now going to relate —an affair which had a very unlucky beginning, and which, beyond all expectation, ended happily enough to one of our city.

There lived, not long since, at Triers, a German called Arrigo, who was a poor man, and served as a porter when any one pleased to employ him ; yet was he reputed a person of a good life, on which account



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(whether true or false I know not) it was affirmed by the people of Triers that, at the very instant of his death, the bells of the great church rang of their own accord, which was accounted a miracle. And all declared that this Arrigo was a saint, and they flocked to the house where the corpse lay, and carried it as a sanctified body to the great church; bringing thither the halt, lame, and blind, expecting that by the touch of it they would all recover. In so great a concourse of people, it happened that three of our own city arrived there, one of whom was named Stecchi, another Martellino, and the third Marchese,—persons that frequented the courts of princes, to divert them as buffoons and mimics. None of these having ever been there before, and seeing the great crowd of people running from all parts of the city, they were much surprised at it; and, hearing the cause, were very desirous of seeing the corpse. They left their baggage therefore at the inn, and Marchese said, “We will see this saint; but I do not know how we shall contrive to get near enough; for the street is full of soldiers and persons in arms,

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whom the governor has stationed there, to prevent any tumult in the city; and, besides, the church is so thronged with people that it would be impossible to get in."

Martellino, who was eager to be a spectator, replied, "I will find a way, notwithstanding, to get close to the very body." "How," said Marchese, "is that possible?" "I'll tell you," answered Martellino: "I intend to counterfeit a cripple, whilst thou shalt support me on one side and Stecchi on the other, as if I were unable to walk by myself, bringing me towards the saint to be cured; and you will see everybody make way for us to go on."

They were much pleased with the contrivance, and went accordingly into a private place, when Martellino distorted his hands, fingers, arms, legs, mouth, eyes, and his whole countenance besides, in such a manner that it was frightful to behold him; and nobody that saw him but would have imagined that he was really so lame and deformed. Being carried in that guise by Marchese and Stecchi, they directed their way to the church, crying out in a most piteous manner all the way, to make room

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for God's sake, to which the people condescended. In a little time they attracted the eyes of every one, and the general cry was, "Room! room!" till at length they came where the body of Saint Arrigo lay; when Martellino was taken from them by some persons that stood around, and laid all along upon the body, to the end he might, by that means, receive the benefit of a cure. All the people's eyes were now upon him, expecting the event; when he, who was master of his business, first began to stretch his fingers, then his hands, afterwards his arms, and at last his whole body; which when the people saw, they set up such shouts in praise of Saint Arrigo that a clap of thunder would hardly have been distinguished.

Now it happened that a Florentine was not far off, that knew Martellino very well (not whilst his body was distorted, but after his pretended cure), who fell a-laughing, and cried, "Good God! who would not have taken him to have been really a cripple?" Which some of the bystanders hearing, they immediately said, "And was he not so?" "No," answered the other, "as God is my judge, he was always as straight as

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any person here; but he has the art, as you have now seen, of turning his body into what shape he pleases."

There needed nothing further to set them all on fire; they therefore pressed most violently on, crying out, "Seize the villain, that blasphemer of God and His saints, who, being in no wise disordered, comes here to make a jest of our saint and us." Whereupon they dragged him by the hair of the head, and threw him upon the ground, kicking him and tearing the clothes off his back; nor was there a person there that did not endeavour to give him a blow; whilst Martellino kept crying out for God's sake to have mercy; but all to no purpose, for the blows thickened faster upon him.

Marchese and Stecchi now began to be in some pain for themselves, and, not daring to help him, they cried out with the multitude, "Kill him! kill him!" contriving all the time how to get him out of their hands; nevertheless he had certainly been murdered, but for the following expedient. Marchese, knowing that the officers of justice were at the door, ran to the lieutenant that commanded, crying out, "Sir, help me, for God's

DAY II: NOVEL I

sake ; here's a fellow that has picked my pocket of a hundred florins ; I beg you will assist me in getting them back again." And immediately twelve of the sergeants ran where Martellino was in the utmost jeopardy, and with the greatest difficulty got him away, all trodden under foot and bruised as he was, and carried him to the palace, followed by many of the people, who had been incensed against him, and who, now hearing that he was taken up for a cut-purse, and seeing no other way of revenging themselves, declared that they had also been robbed by him.

On hearing these complaints, the judge, who was an ill-tempered man, took him aside and examined him ; whilst Martellino answered him in a jesting manner, making no account of their accusations. At which the judge being provoked, ordered him to be trussed up, and gave him several sharp bouts of the strappado, that he might make him confess the crimes he was charged with, in order to hang him afterwards. He being therefore laid upon the ground, the judge asking him if those things with which he was accused were true, and telling him that it would be in vain to deny them, he

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made answer and said, "My lord, I am ready to confess the truth; but please to order first all my accusers to say when and where I robbed them, and I will then tell you truly what I am guilty of, and what not." The judge readily consented, and, having summoned some of them before him, one said he had picked his pocket eight days ago, another four days, and some made answer that he had robbed them that same day. Martellino replied, "My lord, they are all liars; for I had not been here many hours (and would to God I had never come at all!) before I went to view this saint, where I got abused as you now see. That this is true, the officer who keeps your book of presentations, as also my landlord, will testify for me; therefore I beg you would not torture and put me to death, at the instance of these people."

When Marchese and Stecchi heard what had passed before the judge, and that their friend was severely handled, they began to be in great fear about him, saying to themselves that they had taken him out of the frying-pan to throw him into the fire; and they ran from place to place to find out

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their landlord, whom they acquainted with what had happened. He, laughing heartily at their story, carried them to one Sandro Agolanti, a person of great interest in the city, to whom they related the whole affair, entreating him to have pity on poor Martellino. Sandro, after much laughter, went to the governor of the town, and prevailed upon him to have Martellino brought into his presence. The messenger that went for him found him standing in his shirt, all terrified, before the judge, because the latter would hear nothing in his favour (having an aversion perhaps to our countrypeople), and being probably resolved to hang him at all events; and he refused, till he was compelled, to deliver him up. Martellino being brought before the governor, told him everything that had happened, and entreated him as a special favour that he would let him go, saying that till he came to Florence he should always think he had the rope about his neck. The governor was highly diverted with the relation, and, ordering every one a suit of apparel, beyond all their hopes they escaped from the most imminent danger, and got safe and sound home.

NOVEL II

Rinaldo d'Asti, having been robbed, comes to Castel Guiglielmo, where he is entertained by a widow lady, makes good his loss, and returns safe home.

THE ladies all laughed immoderately at Martellino's adventure, as did the gentlemen likewise, but more especially Filostrato, who, as he sat next to Neifile, was ordered by the queen to begin his novel; and he immediately complied as follows:—

I am going to relate a story of things catholic, intermingled partly with misfortunes and partly with love, which may be of use to such as walk in love's uncertain paths; in which it happens to those who have not said the Paternoster of Saint Julian that they often get a bad night's rest, though they lie in a good bed.

In the time of Azzo, Marquis of Ferrara, a certain merchant, named Rinaldo d'Asti,



DAY II: NOVEL II.

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came to Bologna to transact some affairs of his own ; which being done, and he on his return home, it chanced as he came out of Ferrara, and was riding towards Verona, that he fell in with some persons who seemed to be merchants also, but were in reality highwaymen, and unguardedly joined them. They, finding him to be a merchant, and supposing therefore that he must have money about him, resolved, as soon as an opportunity offered, to rob him ; and, that he should have no suspicion, they rode on discoursing with him like persons of reputation and character, showing themselves extremely complaisant and courteous, inso-much that he thought himself happy in meeting with such good company, as he was alone, and had only one servant.

Talking of various things, they began at last to speak of prayers, and one of the rogues, there being three in number, turned towards Rinaldo and said, "And pray, sir, what sort of prayer do you use when you are upon a journey?" "In good truth," answered Rinaldo, "I know little of those matters, and am master of very few prayers; but I live in an old-fashioned way, and can

THE DECAMERON

tell that twelve pence make a shilling, nevertheless I always use, when I am upon a journey, before I go out of my inn, to say one Paternoster and one Ave Maria for the souls of the father and mother of Saint Julian, and after that I pray to God and Saint Julian to send me a good lodging at night; and let me tell you, sir, very often have I met with great dangers upon the road, from all which I still escaped, and when night drew on I always came to a good lodging; which favour I firmly believe Saint Julian, to whose honour I speak it, hath obtained of God for me; nor do I think I should ever travel securely, or succeed in my lodging at night, were I to forget this prayer." "Then," said the other, "to be sure you offered up that prayer this morning?" "Most certainly I did," answered Rinaldo. Said the rogue to himself, having determined how to handle him, "Thou wilt have need enough of it; for, if I mistake not, thy lodging is like to be none of the best;" and afterwards he added aloud, "I have travelled much myself, yet did I never say that prayer, though I have heard it often commended, and I have

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always fared well, and now this night shall you see which of us will get the better lodging; I must own, however, that instead of it I have used the *Dirupisti*, or the *Intemerata*, or the *De profundis*, which, as my grandmother was wont to tell me, are of singular virtue."

Thus they travelled along, discoursing upon many subjects, and waiting for a fit time and place to put their wicked purpose in execution; when at length it happened that the time growing late, and the place private, being at the ford of a river near Castel Guiglielmo, they made their assault, and robbed and stripped him to the shirt; and leaving him there on foot they said to him, "Go, see if thy Saint Julian will provide as good a lodging for thee to-night as we shall have." So, passing the river, away they went. The servant, like the rascal he was, seeing his master attacked, rode away without offering the least assistance, and never stopped till he came to Castel Guiglielmo; where, it being late when he got in, without giving himself any farther trouble, he took up his lodging.

Rinaldo remained there in his shirt,

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without shoes or stockings; the weather extremely cold, and snowing incessantly. Not knowing what to do, the dark night coming on apace, and he all over in a tremble, with his teeth chattering for cold, he now began to look round for shelter where he might continue that night, for fear of being starved to death; but seeing none (the whole country being laid waste by the late war), and being urged by the cold, he trudged on quickly towards Castel Guiglielmo, not knowing whether his servant had gone thither or elsewhere, but supposing, if he got admittance, that he should meet with relief. But before he came within a mile of the town, it grew quite dark; and it was so late when he got thither that, finding the gates locked and the bridge drawn up, he could obtain no entrance. Grieving much at this, and now quite discouraged, he looked about to see if he could find a cover from the snow; when by chance he spied a house hanging a little way over the wall of the castle, under which he proposed to stand all night, and then to depart: there he found a door in the wall, but fast locked; and, gathering

DAY II: NOVEL II

some straw together which was lying about, he sat down thereon, all pensive and sad, and making loud complaints to Saint Julian, telling him that this was not according to the confidence he had always reposed in him.

But Saint Julian, who had a regard for him, soon provided a better lodging. There was a widow lady in that castle, of great beauty, whom the Marquis Azzo loved as his life, and kept in that house under which Rinaldo had taken shelter. That very day the marquis had promised to come to stay all night with her, she having secretly provided a bath for him, and a most elegant supper. Everything being now ready, and only the marquis's company wanting, an express reached him with despatches, which required him to take horse instantly; he therefore sent to the lady to excuse him, and posted away, at which she was much concerned, and, not knowing how to pass her time, resolved to go herself into the bath which she had provided for the marquis, and then to sup and go to bed. Now, it happened that the bath was near to the door where poor Rinaldo was sitting, so that she, being therein, heard all his com-

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plaints and shiverings; whereupon she called her maid, and ordered her to look over the wall at the door threshold, and inquire who that person was there, and what he wanted. She went, and by the clearness of the sky could just discern Rinaldo sitting in the manner before described; and, having demanded of him who he was, he made answer as well as he could, trembling all the while so much that she could scarcely understand him, telling her how he came thither, and entreating her not to let him perish with cold. The girl was moved to compassion, and, returning, related the whole story to her mistress, who had pity on him likewise; and, recollecting that she had the key of the door which sometimes served for the private admission of the marquis, she said, "Go and open the door gently; we have victuals enough, and nobody to sit down, and we may also spare him a lodging." The maid commended her great charity, and, having opened the door and found him almost frozen to death, she said, "Make haste, good man, and get thee into this bath, which yet is warm;" with which he im-

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mediately complied, without waiting for any farther invitation, and he found himself so much refreshed by the warmth of it that he seemed restored from death to life. Then the lady sent him some clothes, which had been her husband's, and which fitted him as well in all respects as if they had been made for him. Expecting her further commands, he began to thank God and Saint Julian, who had delivered him from the prospect of a most terrible night, and brought him at last where he was like to meet with good entertainment.

The lady, having now reposed herself a little, ordered a great fire to be made in the hall, and coming thither, she inquired concerning the honest man, what sort of person he was. To whom the maid replied, "Madam, now he is clothed, he seems to be a good handsome man, and well behaved." "Go then," said she, "and call him, and bid him come to the fire; and he may also sup with me, for I fear he has had but a sorry supper." When Rinaldo came into the hall, and saw the lady, who appeared to him to be a woman of consequence, he made her the most profound reverence,

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showing all possible acknowledgments for the favours he had received. And the lady, finding him to answer the character she had received of him from her maid, made him sit down freely by the fireside with her, and inquired concerning the misfortunes which had brought him thither, of which he gave her a faithful account, and obtained her easy credit, she having heard something of the servant's coming thither before. She then told him what she knew of the matter, and how the fellow was to be met with in the morning.

When supper was ready, Rinaldo, at the lady's desire, washed his hands with her, and sat down to table. He was of goodly stature and person, of pleasing and graceful mien, and in the prime of manhood, which drew upon him the lady's amorous glances, the more so as the marquis had failed in his assignation. She therefore, after supper, consulted with her maid, asking her whether the visitor might not well supply the place of the marquis (who perchance was deceiving her), and whether she ought not to pick up what fortune had cast in her way. The maid, who well understood her mistress's

DAY II: NOVEL II

mind, advised her to seize the opportunity. The lady thereupon went back to the fire-side, where she had left him, and, with an earnest look, said, "Ah, Rinaldo, why are you so pensive? are you not thinking of the loss of your horse, and some few garments? Be of good cheer; you are, as it were, in your own house; and I will say more, that seeing you attired in these clothes of my deceased husband, fancying you were his very self, many times to-night I have desired to embrace and kiss you; and had I not feared your displeasure I should have done so." Rinaldo, who was no fool in these matters, hearing her words and noting the meaning glance that accompanied them, approached with open arms, and said, "Madam, when I think that henceforth I can always say I owe my life to you, considering the plight from which you rescued me, it would be a gross discourtesy not to strive in every way to please you; and therefore, madam, kiss and embrace me at your pleasure, and I shall be only too happy to reciprocate such favours." After this, more words were needless; the lady cast her arms about his neck, and they

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presently passed into another chamber, where they spent the remainder of the night in great felicity. In the morning, to prevent the least suspicion, she gave him some old clothes, and filled his pocket with money, begging of him to keep it secret; and, having directed him where to find his servant, she let him out at the same door he came in at.

He therefore, as soon as it was broad day, entered into the castle as if he had come a great way, where he found the fellow, and soon clothed himself out of his portmanteau; and, as he was going to mount his man's horse, by great fortune it happened that the three rogues who had robbed him the day before were taken up on some other account, and brought into the castle; when, by their own confession, he got his horse, clothes, and money returned to him, and lost nothing but a pair of garters, they not knowing what had become of them. Rinaldo now thanked God and Saint Julian, and, mounting his horse, arrived safe at his own house, and the very next day the three villains were exhibited in public, dancing on nothing.





DAY II: NOVEL III.

NOVEL III

Three young gentlemen lavish away their fortunes, and a nephew of theirs, returning home in as desperate a condition, falls in company with an Abbot, whom he afterwards finds to be the King of England's daughter, who marries him, and makes good his uncles' losses, resettling them in their former prosperity.

ALL admired the adventures of Rinaldo d'Asti, and commended his devotion, giving thanks to God and Saint Julian who had succoured him in his great necessity. Nor was the lady blamed (though they did not care to speak out) for making use of the opportunity that offered. Whilst they were laughing at these things, Pampinea, finding that she was to speak next, after a little considering what she was to say, and receiving the queen's command, began at last in this manner:—

The more we speak of the acts of Fortune,

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so much the more, to such as consider them attentively, there remains to be spoken; which none need wonder at who consider that all things which we foolishly call our own are in her power, and that she blindly wills them from one to another incessantly, and without any rule or method that can be discovered by us. Which, though it be showed every day in everything, and has also been enlarged upon in some former novels, nevertheless, as the queen is pleased that this should be our present subject, I shall add, to what has been said already, a story which I think you will not dislike.

There dwelt formerly in our city a knight named Tedaldo, who, as some report, was of the family of the Lamberti; though others say he belonged to the Agolanti. But, be that as it will, he was the most wealthy knight of all that lived in his time, and had three sons; the eldest was called Lamberto, the second Tedaldo, and the third Agolante, all courteous and well-bred young persons, though the eldest was not above eighteen when their father died, leaving them in possession of his vast wealth. They, finding

DAY II: NOVEL III

themselves so rich, and having nobody to control them, began to spend apace, by keeping vast numbers of servants, and fine horses and dogs and hawks, with open house for all comers, making continual tilts and tournaments, and sparing no diversions that belong to gentlemen, indulging themselves besides in every youthful lust and passion. They had not led this life long before their riches began to waste, and, their rents not being sufficient to defray their current expenses, they mortgaged and sold first one estate and then another; so that they saw themselves coming to nothing, and then poverty opened their eyes, which had been hitherto kept shut. One day, therefore, Lamberto called his two brothers together, and set forth to them the great repute in which their father had lived, and the wealth he had left them, and how much they were now impoverished through their inordinate expenses; advising them, in the best manner he was able, that before matters grew worse they should sell the little that was left, and retire from that quarter.

His advice was followed; and, without

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taking any leave, or making the least stir, they left Florence, and went directly for England. Coming to London, they took a little house, and lived as frugally as possible, letting out money at interest. And fortune was so kind to them that in a few years they got a great deal of money, by which means it happened that first one and then another returned to Florence, where they recovered back a great part of their estates, and purchased others in addition, and got married; and, keeping on their banking trade still in England, they sent a nephew thither, whose name was Alessandro, to manage their business. The three brothers, therefore, continued at Florence; and, forgetting to what misery they had been reduced by their former extravagance, and notwithstanding they all had families, began to spend immoderately, having large credit from the merchants. Their expenses were supported for some years by returns from Alessandro, who had let out money to the barons upon their castles and other estates, which turned to good account. Whilst the three brothers continued spending in this manner, and

DAY II: NOVEL III

borrowing whenever they stood in need, having their whole dependence upon returns from England, contrary to every one's expectation, a war broke out there between the King and his son, which divided the whole kingdom, some taking part with one and some with the other ; on which account the barons' castles which were in Alessandro's possession were seized on, and nothing now was left him that turned to any profit. But, living in hopes of peace every day, and that then he should have both principal and interest, Alessandro still continued in the kingdom, whilst the three brethren at Florence abated nothing of their extravagance, but continued borrowing more daily. And no money coming for some years, they at length lost all their credit, and people being desirous of getting what was their due, their effects were seized, which not being found sufficient, they were thrown into prison for the remainder, and their wives and children dispersed up and down the country, in a most distressed condition, with no prospect but of misery for the rest of their lives.

Alessandro, after waiting some years, and

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finding no likelihood of peace in England, but that he continued there to no purpose and in danger of his life, resolved for Italy, and he set out by himself. And as he was going out of Bruges, he overtook a young abbot clothed in white, attended with a great equipage; two ancient knights followed, related to the King. These Alessandro joined, and, having made himself known to them, was well received. Travelling together, he modestly inquired who those monks were that rode before, with such a retinue, and whither they were going; when one of the knights made answer and said, "He that rides first is a young gentleman, a relation of ours, who is lately made abbot of one of the richest abbeys in England; and, because he is younger than is required by the law for such a dignity, we are going to Rome to entreat our Holy Father to dispense with his want of years: but this is to be a secret."

The new abbot, riding sometimes before his company and sometimes behind (as is usual with persons on the road), got sight at last of Alessandro, who was a graceful,

DAY II: NOVEL III

well-behaved young gentleman, and was so taken with him at the very first view that he never saw any one he liked better ; and, having called him aside, he inquired who he was, whence he came, and whither he was going. Alessandro answered him very ingenuously, and, at the same time, made him an offer of his little service. The abbot was much pleased with his modest and pretty manner both of speaking and behaviour, finding, though his business was mean, that he was a gentleman. And, being full of compassion for his losses, he began to comfort him in a friendly manner, bidding him to be of good courage, for if he were a worthy man God might exalt him to a higher pitch than that from which fortune had cast him down ; and desired him, as he was going towards Tuscany, to make one in his company, because he was likewise travelling thither. Alessandro returned thanks for the encouragement he had given him, and said he was entirely at his service. The abbot riding on (having got some new fancies in his head since the sight of Alessandro) chanced, after some days' travelling, to come to a country village,

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which afforded but bad accommodation; and, because the abbot had a mind to lie there, Alessandro made him alight at the house of a person with whom he was acquainted, and provided him a bed in the least incommodious part of the house. And being now become steward of the household, as it were, to the abbot, he disposed of the company in different parts of the town, in the most convenient manner he was able. And after the abbot had supped, it being now midnight, and every one gone to rest, Alessandro inquired of the landlord where he was to lie. Who made answer, "In good truth, sir, you see my house is quite full, so that I and my family must be forced to sleep on benches; yet there are some granaries in the abbot's chamber; I can carry a pallet-bed for you thither, and you may rest as well as you can." "But, landlord," quoth Alessandro, "how can I be in the abbot's chamber, it being so small that there is no room for any of his monks? If I had thought of it before the curtains were drawn, the monks should have lain in the granaries, and I would have gone where the monks are."

DAY II: NOVEL III

Said the host, "The case is this: you may lie there, if you please, as well as anywhere in the world; the abbot is asleep, and his curtains drawn; I can convey a little bed thither softly, and you may rest very comfortably." Alessandro, finding that it might be done without disturbing the abbot, consented, and accommodated himself there with as little noise as possible.

The abbot, whose newly-awakened desires kept him awake, heard what passed between Alessandro and his landlord; and, finding that Alessandro was there, he began to reason with himself in this manner: "I have now a fit opportunity to compass my desires; if I let this pass, the like may never offer again." Resolving therefore to make use of it, and supposing that all was quiet in the house, he called, with a low voice, "Alessandro!" and bade him come and lie down by him, who, after many excuses, undressed himself and went to his bed. The abbot now laid his hand upon the other's breast, with other actions such as lovers use; at which Alessandro was much surprised, and began to fear some bad design; which as soon as the abbot

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perceived, he could not help smiling ; and, having laid his own bosom bare, he took Alessandro's hand and put it upon it, saying, "Be not afraid : convince yourself of what I am." Alessandro found beneath his hand two breasts, smooth, firm, and delicate like polished ivory, which convinced him that it was a woman ; and he was going to become more familiar, when she interrupted him, saying, "Before you come nearer to me, observe what I am going to say : I am a woman, and not a man, as you see, and am now travelling to the Pope, for him to dispose of me in marriage ; but, whether it be your good fortune or my unhappiness, since I first saw you the other day I could not forbear loving you, and I assure you no woman ever loved a man better than I do you. I therefore am determined to marry you in preference to any other person ; and, if you will not accept of me, go from whence you came." Though she was unknown to Alessandro, yet, when he considered the company that was with her, he supposed she must be a lady of distinction, and her person he saw was beautiful ; therefore, without much

DAY II: NOVEL III

consideration, he declared that if she were willing he should be highly pleased. She then rose up in bed, and turning towards a crucifix that stood upon the table, gave a ring into his hand, and made him espouse her; whereupon they embraced with mutual satisfaction, and passed the night very joyfully together.

And having consulted as to their future behaviour, Alessandro arose at daybreak, and quitted the chamber stealthily, so that none knew where he had slept, and with a merry heart proceeded in company with the abbot and his retinue on their journey to Rome; and in a day or two she, with the two knights and Alessandro, were introduced to his Holiness, and, after the proper ceremony was over, she addressed herself to him in this manner:

“Holy Father, you know better than anybody that they who desire to live honestly and well should avoid, as much as in them lies, all occasions which may lead them to act otherwise. For which reason have I come away, with a great part of the treasure of my father, who is King of England, and was about to marry me, young as I am, to

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the King of Scotland, who is very old, to beg that your Holiness would dispose of me in marriage. Nor was it the age of the King of Scotland that made me fly, so much as the fear of doing, through youthful frailty, were I married to him, what should be contrary both to the laws of God and to the honour of our royal house. As I was coming with this intention, I accidentally beheld this young gentleman, whose merit and behaviour make him worthy of the greatest princess, although his family be less noble. Him have I chosen, nor will I think of any other, however it may seem to my father or any one else. The principal inducement then to this journey is removed ; but I chose to proceed, that I might visit the holy places with which this city abounds, and also your Holiness, to the end that the contract of marriage, made only in the presence of God, may be declared in yours, and so made public to the world ; wherefore I humbly entreat your blessing, to make us more capable of pleasing Him whose vicar you are, that we may live together to the honour of God and of you, and at length die so."

DAY II: NOVEL II:

Alessandro was greatly surprised and overjoyed when he heard his wife was the King of England's daughter ; but the knights were enraged beyond measure, and, had it not been for the Pope's presence, they had certainly offered violence to Alessandro, and perhaps to the princess likewise. On the other hand, the Pope was in amaze, both at her dress and the choice she had made ; but seeing what was done could not be remedied, he was willing to satisfy her request, and having comforted the two knights, whom he saw in confusion, and reconciled them to the lady and Alessandro, gave orders for what he would have done. And when the day appointed was come, he made the lady appear most royally dressed before all the cardinals and other great personages, who had been invited to a most magnificent feast, where she appeared so beautiful and courteous that every one was charmed with her ; in like manner was Alessandro richly apparelled, in his aspect and behaviour being more like a prince than a person brought up to trade, and was much honoured by the two knights. The Pope saw the marriage celebrated with all imaginable grandeur,

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and, after receiving his benediction, they took their leave.

Alessandro and his lady were desirous, when they left Rome, of seeing Florence, where fame had already carried the news of their marriage ; and they were there received with the utmost respect. She immediately took the three brothers out of prison, paying all their debts, and settled them and their wives in their former estates. This gained them the good-will of every one ; and departing thence, they took Agolante with them, and came to Paris, where the King received them in a most honourable manner. From thence the two knights went to England, where they prevailed so far with the King that he forgave his daughter, and received them with all possible demonstrations of joy, making his son-in-law a knight, and creating him Earl of Cornwall. Alessandro's behaviour and conduct were such, that he accommodated matters between father and son, which was of great service to the kingdom, and gained the love and esteem of every one. Agolante recovered all that was due to him, and returned to Florence immensely rich, being first knighted by

DAY II: NOVEL III

Count Alessandro, who lived happily with his princess ; and it is reported that, through his prudence and valour, and the assistance of his father-in-law, he made a conquest of Scotland, and was crowned king thereof.

NOVEL IV

Landolfo Ruffolo, falling into poverty, became a pirate, and was taken by the Genoese, and suffered shipwreck ; but saved himself upon a cask of jewels, and was taken out of the sea by a woman at Corfu, and afterwards returned home very rich.

LAURETTA sat next to Pampinea, and finding her tale now brought to a fair conclusion, began thus :—

Most kind ladies, there is no greater act of fortune, in my opinion, than to see one of low condition arrive at princely dignity, as Pampinea has just now showed us in the case of Alessandro. And, though it be necessary that whoever discourses on the subject proposed should keep within the very same terms, yet shall I not scruple to relate a story which, notwithstanding it contained greater hardships than the former, had not so glorious an end. I am sensible



DAY II: NOVEL IV.

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that, in this respect, I shall be the less regarded; but, as I am able to give you no better, I hope you will excuse me.

It is generally said that the sea-coast from Reggio to Gaeta is the pleasantest part of Italy; that part of it near Salerno, which the inhabitants call the coast of Malfi, is full of little towns, gardens, rivulets, as also rich people expert at merchandise; amongst the rest there is a town called Ravello, in which were many wealthy persons, and one especially, called Landolfo Ruffolo, who, not content with his great store, but willing to make it double, was near losing all he had, and himself also. This man, having settled his affairs, as other merchants are used to do, bought a large ship, and, freighting it all on his own account, set sail for the island of Cyprus. He there found many ships laden with the same commodities, in regard to which it was necessary for him not only to make a quick mart of his goods, but he was also farther constrained, if he meant to dispose of them at all, to sell them for a trifle, to his great loss and almost ruin. Grieving much thereat, nor knowing what to do, seeing that from great wealth

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he was reduced almost to poverty, he resolved either to die or to repair his losses from other people, before he would return home poor, as he came from thence so rich. Meeting with a merchant, who bought his great ship of him, with the money made of that and his other merchandise he purchased a light little vessel fit for a pirate, arming and furnishing it with everything proper for that purpose, intending to make other people's goods his own, and especially those of the Turks. And fortune was abundantly more favourable to him in this way of life than she had been in merchandise; for in the space of a year he took so many Turkish prizes, that he found he had not only got his own again, but made it more than double.

Being now comforted for his former loss, and thinking he had enough, and for fear of a second disaster, he resolved to make the best of his way home with what he had acquired; and, as he was still fearful of trade, he had no mind to employ any more of his money that way, but set sail in the little vessel in which he had gained it. He was no sooner in the Archipelago, but night drew

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on, and a sirocco or great south-east wind arose, directly contrary to their intended course, which made such a sea that the ship could not bear up against it, and they were glad to get into a bay under the cover of a little island, to wait for better weather.

Landolfo had just entered the harbour when two Genoese ships came in from Constantinople to avoid the same storm; and as soon as the men in them saw the small bark they blocked her up in the passage, and understanding whom she belonged to, and that the owner was known to be rich, as men addicted to plunder and rapine, they resolved to make it their own prize. Landing some of their men, therefore, well armed with cross-bows and other weapons, they possessed themselves of a station, to prevent any of the crew issuing out of the bark, unless they ran the hazard of their lives; whilst the rest got into the long-boat, and, the sea being favourable, they soon boarded Landolfo's vessel, and took all his people, and everything in it, without the loss of a man, leaving him nothing but a waistcoat; and after they had cleared the vessel they sunk her.

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The day following, the wind being changed, they set sail, and had a good voyage all that day ; but night coming on, the wind became boisterous again, and the storm was such that the two ships were parted ; whilst that wherein poor Landolfo was drove with the utmost violence upon the coast of Cephalonia, and broke all to pieces. The poor wretches that were on board (the sea being covered with all sorts of merchandise, and with chests and broken timber, as is common in such cases), notwithstanding it was dark and the waves very great, endeavoured, such as were able to swim, to lay hold of such things as they saw floating. Amongst these was the unfortunate Landolfo, who, though he had wished for death a thousand times the day before, rather than to be carried home a beggar, now he saw death at hand was sufficiently terrified, and got hold of a plank, like the rest, in hopes that, by delaying his fate, God would send him some means for his escape : and riding upon it as well as he could, being driven by the wind backwards and forwards, he supported himself till it was daylight, and then looking round

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him he could see nothing but clouds and water, and a chest driving towards him, which came so near him sometimes that he was afraid it would dash against him, when he would endeavour, with the little strength he had left, to put it by with his hand. At length it happened that a great blast of wind sent it with such violence against the board whereon he was sitting that it was upset, and he soused over head and ears in the water; but rising again, and swimming more out of fear than any strength, he found himself at such a distance that he was afraid he could not recover it; getting therefore to the chest, which was nearer, he laid his breast upon it as well as he could, and put his arms round it, and in this manner was he carried up and down, eating nothing, because he had it not, and drinking more than he desired, without knowing where he was, or seeing anything but water for a day and a night.

The next morning (whether it was through God, or the force of the winds) Landolfo, who was well-nigh become a sponge, holding his arms strongly about the chest, as we often see people seize upon anything to

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avoid being drowned, drew near to the island of Corfu, where, by good fortune, a poor woman was scouring her dishes with salt water and sand, who, when she saw him approach, and not perceiving him to be of any shape or figure, cried out and retreated. As he was unable to speak, neither could he see much ; but, as the waves pleased, he was carried to the land, and then she could distinguish the shape of the chest ; and, looking more narrowly, she saw an arm laid over it, and then a face, when she supposed how the case was ; and, being moved by compassion, stepped a little way into the sea, which was now calm, and, taking hold of the hair of his head, drew both him and the chest to land, and with much trouble unfolded his arms from the chest, which she set upon her daughter's head who was with her ; and she carried him like a little child to the town, and put him into a bath, and chafed and washed him with hot water, by which means the vital warmth began to return, and he got some strength. In due time she took him out of the bath, and comforted him with wine and good cordials, and kept him some

DAY II: NOVEL IV

days till he knew where he was ; she then restored him his chest, and told him he might now provide for his departure.

He, who remembered nothing about it, received it from the hands of the woman, as supposing it might serve for his expenses a small time, how little soever it was worth, and finding it very light was something disheartened ; however, as she was out of the way, he broke it open, and found a great quantity of jewels, both such as were set and others, of which he had some judgment ; and, knowing their value, he was now thoroughly comforted, praising God for not having yet forsaken him. But, as he had been twice buffeted by fortune already, and being fearful of a third mishap, he judged that great caution was requisite to bring these things safe home ; he wrapped them up, therefore, in old rags as well as he could, and told the woman that he had no further use for the chest, but that she might keep it if she would give him a sack in its stead, which she was very glad to do. And now, returning her a thousand thanks, he departed with his sack upon his neck, and passed over in a bark to Brandizio, and so

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from one sea to another, till he came to Trani, where he met with merchants of his own town, who clothed him out of charity, after he had told them all that had happened to him, excepting that of the chest of jewels; they also gave him a horse, and sent company with him to Ravello, whither he said he was resolved to return; and, finding himself there in safety, he thanked God for it. And now he inquired more narrowly into his sack than he had done before, and found so many valuable jewels that, rating them at the lowest prices, he was twice as rich as when he left home. Finding means therefore to dispose of them, he sent a sum of money to the woman at Corfu, who had taken him out of the sea and treated him so kindly, and also to the merchants at Trani for clothing him; and he lived handsomely upon the remainder (without having any more mind to trade) the rest of his life.





DAY II: NOVEL V.

NOVEL V

Andreuccio of Perugia, coming to Naples to buy horses, meets with three remarkable accidents in one night ; from all which he escapes, and returns with a ruby of value.

THE jewels found by Landolfo put me in mind, said Fiammetta, whose turn it was now to speak, of a story which contains as many perils as the last, although it be different in this respect,—that the first happened in the course of some years, whereas these fell out in the space of one night, as you shall hear.

There lived, as I have heard, at Perugia a young man named Andreuccio di Pietro, a dealer in horses, who, hearing of a good market at Naples, put five hundred florins of gold into his purse, and, having never been from home before, went with some other dealers, and arrived thither on a Sunday in the evening ; and, according to

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the instruction he had received from his landlord, he went into the market next morning, where he saw many horses to his mind, cheapening their price as he went up and down, without coming to any bargain. But, to show people that he came with an intent to buy, he unadvisedly pulled out his purse on all occasions; insomuch that a certain Sicilian damsel, very good-looking, but at every one's service for a small matter, got a sight of it as she was passing along, without being observed by him; and she said to herself, "Who is there that would be my betters, if that purse were mine?" and passed on. Along with this young wench was an old woman, of Sicily likewise, who, as soon as she saw Andreuccio, ran to embrace him, which the young woman observing, without saying a word, stepped aside to wait for her. He immediately knew her, to her great joy, and without much discourse there, she having promised to come to his inn, he went on about his business, but bought nothing all that morning. The young woman taking notice first of the purse, and then of the old woman's knowledge of him, and contriving how to

DAY II: NOVEL V

come at all or part of the money, began to inquire of her, as cautiously as might be, if she knew who that man was, or whence he came, or what was his business, and also how she happened to know him; which she answered in every particular as fully as he himself could have done, having lived a long time with his father in Sicily, and afterwards at Perugia; telling her also the cause of his coming thither, and when he was to return. Thinking herself now sufficiently instructed, both concerning his kindred and their names, the fair damsel grounded her scheme upon it in the most artful manner possible; and going home, she furnished the old woman with employment for the whole day, to hinder her returning to him; and in the meantime, toward the evening, she despatched a young woman, well trained for such services, to his lodgings, who found him, by chance, sitting alone at the door, and inquiring of him whether he knew such a person of Perugia, he made answer that he was the man; upon which she took him a little aside, and said, "Sir, a gentlewoman of this city would gladly speak with you, if you

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please." On hearing this, he began to consider the matter ; and held it for granted that the lady must be in love with him, thinking himself as handsome a man as any in Naples ; he answered therefore that he was ready, and demanded where and when the lady would speak with him. The girl replied, " She expects you at her own house as soon as it is agreeable to you."

Without saying a word then to the people of the inn, he bade her show him the way ; and the little maid brought him to the house, which was in a certain street called Malpertugio, a name which sufficiently indicates its character ; but he, knowing nothing of the matter, nor at all suspecting but that he was visiting a place of good repute, and a lady that had taken a fancy to him, went into the house, and going upstairs (whilst the girl called aloud to her mistress, telling her that Andreuccio was there), found her at the top waiting for him. She was young and beautiful enough, and very well dressed. Seeing him appear, therefore, she ran down two or three steps with open arms to meet him, and taking him about the neck, she stood

DAY II: NOVEL V

some time without speaking a word, as if prevented by her over-great tenderness; at last, shedding abundance of tears, and kissing him on the forehead, she said (her words being interrupted as it were with transport), "O my Andreuccio! you are heartily welcome." He, quite astonished at being caressed in such a manner, replied, "Madam, I am proud of the honour to wait upon you." She then took him by the hand, and led him, without saying a word more, through a large dining-room into her own chamber, which was perfumed with roses, orange-flowers, and other costly odours, where was also a fine bed, and other rich furniture, and garments hanging by the walls, far beyond what he had ever seen before, which convinced him that she was some great lady; and sitting down together upon a coffer at the bed's foot she addressed herself to him in this manner:—

"Andreuccio, I am very sure you must be under great astonishment both at my tears and embraces, as being unacquainted with me, and perhaps never having heard of me before; but you will now hear what will surprise you more, namely, that I am

THE DECAMERON

your sister: and I assure you that, since God has indulged me with the sight of one of my brethren, as I wished to have seen them all, I could die contented this very moment. If you be unacquainted with the particulars of my story, I will relate them. Pietro, my father and yours, as I suppose you must know, lived a long time at Palermo, where he was much respected for his behaviour and good-nature (and may be so still) by all that knew him. Amongst others that liked him on that account was my mother, a widow of good family; who, notwithstanding the regard due to her father and brothers, as well as to her own honour, became so intimate with him that at length I was born, and am now what you see. Having occasion afterwards to retire from Palermo, and to return to Perugia, our father left me there an infant, with my mother, and from that time, as far as I can learn, took no more notice either of me or her; which, were he not my father, I could blame him for, considering what ingratitude he showed to my mother—not to speak of the love he owed to me his child, begotten of no vile prostitute—who, out of her abun-

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dant love, had put herself and all her wealth into his hands, without having any farther knowledge of him. But to what purpose? Ill actions, done so long since, are easier blamed than amended. Yet so it was; he left me, as I said, at Palermo, an infant, where, when I grew up, my mother, who was rich, married me to one of the family of the Gergenti, who, out of regard to me and her, came and lived at Palermo, where, strongly adhering to the Guelph faction, and having begun to treat with our King Charles, he was discovered by Frederick, King of Arragon, before his scheme could take effect, and forced to fly from Sicily, at a time when I expected to have been the greatest lady in the island. Taking away what few effects we were able—I call them few, with regard to the abundance we were possessed of—and leaving our estates and palaces behind us, we came at length to this place, where we found King Charles so grateful that he has made up to us, in part, the losses we had sustained on his account, giving us lands and houses, and paying my husband, and your kinsman, a pension besides, as you will hereafter see. Thus live

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I here, where, thanks be to Heaven, and not to you, my dearest brother, I now see you." Which when she had said, she wept and tenderly embraced him again.

Andreuccio hearing this fable so orderly, so artfully composed, and related without the least faltering or hesitation; remembering also that his father had lived at Palermo, and knowing by his own experience how prone young fellows are to love; beholding too her tears and affectionate caresses, he took all she had said for granted, and when she had done speaking he made answer and said, "Madam, it should not seem strange to you that I am surprised; for, in truth—whether it was that my father, for reasons best known to himself, never mentioned you nor your mother at any time; or, if he did, that I have forgot it—I have no more knowledge of you than if you had never been born. And it is the more pleasing to me to find a sister here as I the less expected it, and am also alone; nor is there any man, of what quality soever, who would not value you; much more therefore shall I, who am but a mean trader. But one thing I beg

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you would clear up to me, namely, how came you to know that I was here?" When she replied in this manner: "A poor woman, whom I often employ, told me so this morning; for she lived, as she informed me, with our father a considerable time, both at Palermo and Perugia; and, were it not that it appeared more reputable that you should come to me at my house than I go to you at another person's, I had come directly to you." She then inquired of him particularly, and by name, how all their relations did; to all which he answered her fully, believing more firmly when there was the more reason for suspicion.

Their discourse lasting a long time, and the season being sultry, she ordered in Greek wine and sweetmeats for him; and he making an offer afterwards to depart, because it was supper-time, she would by no means suffer it; but seeming to be under great concern, she embraced him, and said, "Alas! now I plainly see how little account you make of me; that, being with a sister whom you never saw before, and in her house, which you should always make your home, you should yet think of going to sup

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at an inn. Indeed you shall sup with me ; and though my husband be abroad, which I am much concerned at, I know, as a woman, how to pay you some little respect." He, not knowing what other answer to make, said, "I love you as much as it is possible for me to love a sister ; but it will be wrong not to go, because they will expect me to supper all the evening." She immediately replied, "Heaven be praised, we have a present remedy for that ; I will send one of my people to tell them not to expect you ; but you would favour me more, and do as you ought, if you would send to invite your company hither to supper, and afterwards, if you chose to go, you might all of you depart together." He said he should not trouble her that evening with his companions, but she might dispose of him as she pleased. She now made a pretence of sending to his inn, to tell them not to expect him to supper ; and, after much other discourse, they sat down, and were elegantly served with a variety of dishes, which she contrived to last till it was dark night. And rising then from table, he offered to go away ; but she declared that she would by

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no means suffer it, for Naples was not a place to walk in when it was dark, especially for a stranger, and, as she had sent to the inn concerning his supping with her, so had she done the like about his bed. He believing this to be true, and glad also of being with her, was easily prevailed upon to remain. After supper, their discourse lasted a long time, being lengthened out on purpose; and, as it was now midnight, she left him in her own chamber to take his repose with a boy to wait upon him; and she, with her women, retired into another room.

It was sultry hot, on which account Andreuccio, seeing himself alone, stripped to his doublet, and, pulling off his breeches, he laid them under his bolster, and, having occasion to retire, he asked the boy to show him a conveniency, who pointed to a corner of the room where there was a door, and desired him to enter it. He went in without the least suspicion, and set his foot upon a board which, not being nailed at the other end to the rafter on which it was laid, straight flew up, and down they went together.

Heaven was so merciful to him, however,

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that he took no harm, though it was a great height, but was grievously daubed with the filth of which the place was full. Now, that you may better understand this, and what followed also, I shall describe the place to you. In a narrow alley (as you see often between two houses), on tracings reaching from one to the other, were some boards laid, and a place to sit upon, and it was one of these boards that fell down with him. Finding himself now at the bottom, he called in great distress to the boy; but he, the moment he heard him fall, ran to tell his mistress, who hastened to his chamber, to see if his clothes were there, and finding both them and the money, which he, out of a foolish mistrust, always carried about him (and for the sake of which she had laid this snare, pretending to have been of Palermo, and the sister of this Perugian), she took no further care, but made fast the door out of which he passed when he fell. Finding the boy made no answer, he called out louder, but to no purpose; and now, perceiving the trick when it was too late, he climbed up the wall which parted that place from the street, and getting down from thence he came again

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to the door, which he knew full well; there did he knock and call in vain for a long time, lamenting much, and seeing plainly his calamity. "Alas!" quoth he, "in how little time have I lost five hundred florins, and a sister besides!"

And using many other words, he now began to batter the door, and to call out aloud; and he continued doing so, till he raised many of the neighbours, and, among the rest, one of the women where he had been, pretending to be half asleep, opened the casement and called out angrily, "Who makes that noise there?" "Oh!" cried he, "don't you know me? I am Andreuccio, brother to Madam Fiordaliso." When she replied, "Prithee, honest fellow, if thou hast had too much liquor, get thee to bed, and come to-morrow. I know nothing of Andreuccio, nor what thy idle tale means; but go about thy business while thou mayst, and let us rest." "What!" said he, "don't you know what I say? You know well enough, if you will; but, if our Sicilian relationship be so soon forgotten, at least give me my clothes which I left with you, and I'll go with all my heart." She then

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replied, with a sneer, "The man is in a dream;" and shut the window at the same time.

Andreuccio, convinced of his loss, through his great grief became outrageous; and resolving to recover by force what he could not by fair words, took a great stone, and beat against the door harder than ever; which many of the neighbours hearing who had been awaked before, and supposing that he was some spiteful fellow that did this to annoy the woman, and provoked at the noise which he made, they called out, one and all, in like manner as dogs all join in barking at a strange cur, "It is a shameful thing to come to a woman's house at this time of night, with thy idle stories: get thee away, in God's name, and let us sleep; and if thou hast any business with her come to-morrow, and do not keep us awake all night." Encouraged, perhaps, by these last words, a bully in the house, whom he had neither seen nor heard of, came to the window, and, with a most rough and terrible voice, called out, "Who is that below?" Andreuccio, raising up his head at this, beheld an ill-looking rascal, with a great

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black beard, yawning and rubbing his eyes, as if he was just risen from bed, and awaked out of his sleep. He made answer, therefore, not without a good deal of fear, "I am brother to the lady within;" but the other, never waiting to let him make an end of his speech, replied, "I'll come down and beat thee until thou canst not stand, for a troublesome drunken beast as thou art, disturbing everybody's rest in this manner;" and he clapped to the window.

Hereupon some of the neighbours, who knew more of the fellow's disposition and character, called out softly to Andreuccio, and said, "For Heaven's sake, honest man, go away, unless thou hast a mind to lose thy life; it will be much the best for thee."

Terrified therefore with his voice and aspect, and persuaded also by these people, who seemed to speak out of mere goodwill, Andreuccio, quite cast down, and out of all hopes of receiving his money, now directed his course towards that part of the city from whence he had been led by the girl the day before (without knowing whither he was going), in order to get to his inn. But being offensive to himself, on account of the

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scent he carried about him, and desirous of washing in the sea, he turned to the left, through a street called Catalana, and went towards the highest part of the city, where he saw two people coming with a lantern, and fearing that they were the watch, or some ill-disposed persons, stepped into an old house that was near, to hide himself. It happened that these people were going into the very same place; and one of them having laid down some iron tools there, which he carried upon his neck, they had some discourse together about them. And as they were talking, said one to the other, "Here is the most confounded stink, whatever be the meaning of it, that ever I smelt in my life." Whereupon, holding up the lantern, they saw wretched Andreuccio, and, in a good deal of amaze, demanded who he was. He made no answer; and, drawing nearer with the light, they asked what he did there in that condition. He then related to them his whole adventure; and they, easily imagining the place where the thing had happened, said to one another, "This must certainly have been in the house of Scarabone Buttafuoco;" and then,

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turning towards him, one of them proceeded thus: "Honest man, you ought to be very thankful that you fell down, and could not return into the house, for otherwise you would certainly have been murdered as soon as ever you went to sleep, and so have lost your life as well as your money. But what signifies lamenting? You may as soon pluck a star out of the firmament as recover one farthing; nay, you may chance to be killed, should the man hear that you make any words about it."

Having admonished him in this manner, they said, "See, we have pity on you, and if you will engage in a certain affair with us, which we are now about, we are very sure that your share will amount to more than you have lost." He, like a person in despair, told them he was willing.

That day was buried the Archbishop of Naples, whose name was Signor Filippo Minutolo, in rich pontifical robes, and with a ruby on his finger worth upwards of five hundred florins of gold, whom they proposed to strip and rifle; and they acquainted him with their intention. He then, more covetous than wise, went along with them;

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and, as they were going towards the cathedral, he smelt so strong that one said to the other, "Can we contrive no way to wash this man a little, to make him sweeter?" And the other made answer, "We are not far from a well, where there are usually a pulley and a great bucket; let us go thither and we may make him clean in an instant." Coming there they found the rope, but the bucket had been taken away; they therefore agreed to tie him to the rope, and to put him down into the well, and when he had well washed himself he was to shake the rope, and they would draw him up. Now it happened that, after they had let him down, some of the watch, being thirsty with the heat of the weather, and having been in pursuit of some persons, came to that well to drink, and as soon as the two men saw them they took to their heels; the watch, however, saw nothing of them. Andreuccio now having washed himself at the bottom of the well, began to shake the rope; they therefore laid down their clothes and halberds upon the ground, and began to draw the rope, thinking the bucket was fastened thereto, and full of water; and

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when he found himself at the top he let go the rope, and clung fast to the edge of the well. They immediately threw down the rope on seeing him, and ran away, frightened out of their wits, which greatly surprised him; and had he not held fast he had fallen to the bottom, and perhaps lost his life. Getting out in this manner, and beholding their weapons, which he knew belonged not to his companions, he wondered the more; and, being in doubt what the meaning of it could be, he went away without touching anything, lamenting his fate, and not knowing whither. As he was walking along, he met with his companions, who were returning to help him out of the well, and were surprised to see him, inquiring of him who had helped him out. He replied that he could not tell them; and related the whole affair, and what he had found by the well-side; upon which they perceived how it had happened, and, laughing heartily, they acquainted him with the reason of their running away, and who they were that had drawn him up.

Without making more words, it being now midnight, they went to the great church,

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into which they found an easy admittance, and passed directly to the tomb, which was of marble and very magnificent; and with their levers raised up the cover, which was very heavy, so high that a man might go under, and propped it; which being done, said one, "Who shall go in?" "Not I," cried the other, "but Andreuccio shall." "I will not go in," quoth Andreuccio. Then they both turned towards him and said, "What! won't you go in? We will beat your brains out this moment if you don't." Terrified at their threats, he consented, and, being now within, he began to consider with himself in this manner: "These fellows have surely forced me in here to deceive me, and therefore, when I have given them everything, and am endeavouring to get out again, they will certainly run away, and I shall be left destitute." For which reason he resolved to make sure of his part beforehand; and, remembering the ring of value which he had heard them speak of, as soon as ever he got into the vault he took it off the archbishop's finger, and secured it; giving them afterwards the pastoral staff, mitre, and

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gloves, and stripping him to his shirt, he told them there was nothing else. But they, affirming that there was a ring, bid him seek everywhere for it, whilst he assured them that he could nowhere find it, and, pretending to look carefully about, he kept them some time waiting for him: at length they, who were fully as cunning as himself, calling to him to search diligently, suddenly drew away the prop which supported the cover, and left him shut up in the vault. Which when he perceived, you may easily suppose what condition he was in. Many a time did he endeavour with his head and shoulders to raise it up, but in vain; till, overcome with grief, he fell down at last upon the dead body; and whoever had seen him at that time could scarcely have said whether there was more life in one than the other. But when he came to himself he lamented most bitterly, seeing that he was now brought to the necessity of one of these two evils, namely, to die there with hunger and the stench of the dead carcase, if no one came to help him out; or, if that should happen, and he be delivered, then to be hanged for a thief.

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As he was in this perplexity, he heard the noise of many persons in the church, who he supposed were come to do what he and his companions had been about, which added greatly to his fear; but after they had raised up the lid and propped it, a dispute arose which should go in, and none caring to do it, after a long contest, said a priest, "What are you afraid of? Do you think he will eat you? Dead men cannot bite; I will go in myself." And immediately clapping his breast to the edge of the vault, he attempted to slide down with his feet foremost; which Andreuccio perceiving, and standing up, he caught fast hold of one of his legs, as if he meant to pull him in. The priest upon this making a most terrible outcry, got out immediately; and the rest, being equally terrified, ran away, leaving the vault open, as if they had been pursued by a hundred thousand devils. Andreuccio, little expecting this good fortune, got out of the vault, and so out of the church, the same way he came in.

And now daylight beginning to appear, he wandered with the ring on his finger he knew not whither, till, coming to the sea-

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side, he found the way leading to his inn. There he met with his companions and his landlord, who had been in trouble all that night for him; and, having related to them all that had passed, he was advised to get out of Naples with all speed, with which he instantly complied, and returned to Perugia, having laid out his money on a ring, whereas the intent of his journey was to have bought horses.

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Madam Beritola was found on an island with two goats, having lost her two sons, and went from thence to Lunigiana, where one of her sons became servant to the lord thereof, and, being found with his daughter, was by him sent to prison : afterwards, when the country of Sicily rebelled against King Charles, that same son was known again by his mother, and was married to his master's daughter ; and his brother being found likewise, they both returned to great estate and credit.

THE ladies and gentlemen were much diverted with the adventures that befell Andreuccio, as related by Fiammetta ; when Emilia, perceiving the story to be at an end, began, by the queen's order, in this manner :—

Very great and grievous are the changes of fortune, which, as often as we discourse of, so often do they rouse and awaken our understandings, which are but too easily



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enchanted by her flatteries; and I am persuaded, that to hear them recounted must be agreeable both to such as are happy and such as are miserable, inasmuch as it is a caution to the former, and affords matter of comfort to the latter. Wherefore, though great things have been already treated of, yet do I purpose to relate a story no less true than lamentable; which, though it ended well, yet such and so many were the bitter thwartings that one would scarcely imagine they could ever be sweetened by any subsequent joy.

You must understand, then, that after the death of the Emperor Frederick II. Manfredi was crowned King of Sicily, with whom lived, in great favour, a Neapolitan gentleman, whose name was Arrighetto Capece, and who had for his wife a most beautiful and worthy lady of Naples, called Beritola Caracciola. This gentleman having the government of the island in his hands, and understanding that King Charles I. had gained the battle of Benevento, and slain Manfredi; finding also that the whole kingdom had revolted to the conqueror, and reposing but little trust in the scanty faith

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of the Sicilians, nor being willing to become a subject to the enemy of his former master, he prepared secretly to leave the place; which being discovered by the inhabitants, he and many other of Manfredi's friends and servants were delivered up prisoners to King Charles, who took possession also of the island.

In such a sudden change of affairs, Madam Beritola, not knowing what was become of her husband, and fearful of what had already come to pass, to avoid reproach, left everything behind her, and taking only a child of eight years old, called Giusfredi, and being with child of another, she embarked, in the utmost distress, in a little vessel, for Lipari; there she brought forth another son, whom she called Scacciato (or the Expelled), and having provided a nurse, they went on board again with a design to return to her relations at Naples. But it happened contrary to her expectation; for the vessel, which was bound for Naples, was carried by a contrary wind to the island of Ponzo, where, getting into a little harbour, they waited for a more favourable season to pursue their voyage. There they went on

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shore, and, finding a solitary place, she sat down all alone to lament the fate of her dear Arrighetto, and this she did every day; and it happened that being employed in this meditation one day, all those belonging to her bark, save herself, were surprised by a pirate ship and carried off. Madam Beritola, when her daily lamentation was ended, returned, as usual, to see her sons, and was surprised to find nobody; but suspecting what must have happened, and casting her eye towards the sea, she saw the ship at no great distance, towing her little vessel after it, by which she plainly perceived that she had lost her children, as well as her husband; and seeing herself there poor and abandoned, nor expecting ever to meet with any of them again, she fell down in a swoon upon the shore, calling upon her husband and her children. There was no one near, either with cold water or any other means, to bring her to herself, so that her spirits might the more freely wander at their pleasure; but when she was a little recovered, then did her tears and lamentations break out afresh, whilst she called out for her children, and ran to every

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cavern to find them ; till, perceiving at last it was all to no purpose, and dark night drawing on, yet hoping still, without knowing why, she began to take some care of herself, and, leaving the sea-shore, returned to the cave where she was used to make her lamentation.

She passed that night not without infinite pain and grief ; and daylight appearing, she, who had eaten nothing the evening before, being now pinched with hunger, fed upon the green herbs as well as she could, sadly reflecting on what would become of her during the rest of her life. Whilst full of these melancholy reflections, she beheld a goat enter a cave near her, and, after some little stay, come out again and go into the woods ; upon which she arose, and went in where she saw the beast issue forth, and found two young kids, yeaned perhaps that very day, which she thought at that time the prettiest things in the world ; and having milk yet in her breasts from her late delivery, she took them carefully and applied them to her bosom, and they sucked as naturally as if she had been their mother, and from that time made no distinction be-

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tween one and the other. And thus the lady, thinking that she had now met with company in this solitary place, feeding also on herbs, and drinking of water, and lamenting her husband and children as often as she reflected on her past life, became at length disposed to live and die there, growing as familiar with the goats as with her offspring.

By this way of life the poor gentlewoman having almost lapsed into savagery, it happened, after some months, that a vessel from Pisa arrived there by chance, and continued many days, on board of which was a gentleman called Currado de' Marchesi Malespini, with his most virtuous lady, who had been upon a pilgrimage to visit all the holy places in Puglia, and were now returning home ; when, to divert themselves, they went on shore with their servants and some dogs, and being not far from the place where Madam Beritola was, the dogs met with the two kids, which, being now large ones, were feeding abroad, and, as they were closely pursued, fled for refuge to her in the cave ; she arose on seeing this, and getting a stick, beat the dogs away. In the meanwhile Currado and his lady, who were

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following the dogs, came upon her, and beholding her all swarthy, meagre, and hairy, were greatly surprised, and she much more at their appearance. When, at her entreaty, he had drawn his hounds back, they desired she would acquaint them who she was, and what she did there, whereupon she related to them all that had happened to her, and her resolution to stay ; which when Currado, who knew her husband very well, had understood, he was moved with pity, and endeavoured, by many arguments, to draw her from her cruel design, making an offer either to send her home, or to keep her at his own house in the same rank as if she were his sister, where she might wait for better times. When she would not comply with these kind proposals, he left his wife with her, desiring that she would order victuals to be brought, and let her put on some of her clothes, because her own were all ragged, and endeavour, by every possible means, to bring her away. The lady continued with her, and lamented her misfortunes, until the victuals and clothes were brought, when she prevailed upon her to clothe herself and to eat ; and, after much

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entreaty, she declaring that she would never go any more where she was known, persuaded her to depart with them for Lunigiana, together with the two kids and goat, which were now come back, showing all tokens of joy to her, to the great wonder of the lady.

As soon as the weather was favourable, Madam Beritola went on board with Currado and his lady, being followed by the goat and kids; and, because all did not know her true name, they called her Cavriuola (the Goatherdess). The wind was favourable, and soon brought them into the river Magra, where they got on shore, and went to their castle: there she lived with Currado's lady in a widow's dress, like a waiting-woman, behaving herself with all obedience and humility, still loving and cherishing her goats.

Let us now return to the pirates, who had seized at Ponzo upon the little bark which brought Beritola thither, and leaving her there, as having not been seen by them, they carried the rest of the people away to Genoa, where, when the booty came to be divided among the owners of the ship, it

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happened that, amongst other things, the nurse and two children fell to the share of one Guasparrino d'Oria, who sent them to his own house, to be kept as servants. The nurse was exceedingly sorrowful at the loss of her mistress, and the low state of life to which she saw herself and the children now reduced, and wept for a considerable time; but when she saw that tears were of no effect, and that they were slaves together, poor as she was, yet was she wise and prudent, and having comforted herself in the best manner she was able, and considering their condition, she believed that if they were known it might turn to their disadvantage; and hoping besides that their affairs might take a new turn, and they regain their former condition—for this reason she determined to discover their names to nobody, unless she saw a proper time for it, and she told every one who inquired about them that they were her sons, and the eldest she called not Giusfredi, but Giannotto di Procida—as for the younger, she did not regard changing his name—and she told Giusfredi frequently the reason why she had done so, and to

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what dangers he would be exposed should he be known, which the child, who was sensible enough, carefully observed.

They continued in the house of Guasparrino many years, poorly clad and worse shod, employed in the most servile offices, which they bore with great patience: but Giannotto being now in his sixteenth year, and having a spirit much beyond the condition of a servant, despising the meanness of his station, he left Guasparrino, and went on board one of the ships which were bound for Alexandria; and travelling afterwards into divers parts, could in no way advance himself. In the end, about three or four years after his departure from Guasparrino, being grown tall and comely in his person, and having understood that his father, whom he thought to have been dead, was yet alive, but kept in prison by King Charles, despairing now altogether of his fortune, he wandered up and down as a vagabond, till he came to Lunigiana, where by chance he became servant to Currado Malespini, and was much liked as such. He seldom saw his mother, she being commonly with Currado's wife, nor

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did he know her any more than she recognised him, so much had time altered both since they last saw one another.

Living thus in the service of Currado, it happened that a daughter of his, whose name was Spina, being the widow of one Niccolo da Grignano, returned home to her father's; and being a very agreeable young lady, and only sixteen years of age, soon cast her eyes on Giannotto, and he on her, in such a manner that they became enamoured of each other; which love of theirs was not long without taking effect, and was carried on many months before it was discovered. For which reason growing too secure, they were now not so cautious as they ought to have been in such an affair; and, as they were walking one day into a pleasant grove, well planted with trees, leaving the rest of their company behind, they passed on before; and supposing that the others were far enough off, they made choice of a fine bed of flowers for their amorous amusement. Dallying there too long, though the time seemed short to them, they were surprised first by the mother, and afterwards by Currado him-

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self, who, being grieved beyond measure, ordered three of his servants to seize and carry them bound to a certain castle of his, resolving, out of his extreme rage and passion, to put them both to a shameful death. The mother, though she was much troubled, and thought her daughter worthy of punishment for the crime she had committed, yet perceiving what her husband's intention was, she could not bear that he should proceed to such extremities, and begged that he would not, in his old age, be so far hurried away with passion as to murder his own daughter, and to stain his hands with the blood of a servant; but rather show his resentment in a different manner, namely, by committing them to close imprisonment, there to pine and lament the folly they had committed. By these and other persuasions the good lady prevented his putting them to death; and he now gave orders to have them sent to separate prisons, where they should be well watched, and kept with little food and great severity, till he should farther resolve what to do with them. What their life now was in captivity and continual tears, with more

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fasting than was needful for them, any one may easily imagine.

Giannotto and La Spina remaining in this comfortless condition, and a whole year being spent without Currado taking any farther notice of them, it happened that Pedro, king of Arragon, by means of Gian di Procida, caused the island of Sicily to revolt, and gained it from King Charles; on which account Currado, who was of the Ghibelline faction, made great rejoicings, which Giannotto being informed of by some of his keepers, he fetched a deep sigh, and said, "Alas! for these fourteen years have I been wandering through the world, waiting only for this event; and now the thing is come to pass, that I may be destitute of all hope, I am in prison, from which I never expect to depart with life!" "And what," said the keeper, "hast thou to do with the affairs of princes? Or what business hast thou with Sicily?" When he replied, "My heart is fit to burst when I call to mind the rank my father held there; for, though I was but an infant when I fled from thence, I can very well remember his being governor under King Manfredi." "And who was thy

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father, then?" continued the keeper. "My father," replied he, "I may now safely discover, since I see myself out of all danger from such a discovery: his name was and is still, if he be living, Arrighetto Capece; and I am not Giannotto, but Giusfredi; and I make no doubt, if I were at liberty, but by returning to Sicily I might obtain great promotion."

The honest man, without asking any more questions, reported all this, as soon as he had an opportunity, to Currado, who, seeming to the keeper to take no notice of it, went directly to Madam Beritola, and inquired of her whether she ever had a son by Arrighetto, who was called Giusfredi. The lady replied, in tears, that if her eldest son were living he was so called, and was now twenty-two years of age. Currado hearing this, immediately concluded it must be the same person, and, if this should prove so, a method occurred how he might at the same time show mercy, and take away his daughter's disgrace and that of his family, by making her his wife. He consequently called Giannotto secretly before him, and examined him particularly with respect to

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his past life ; and finding, by many manifest tokens, that he was truly Giusfredi, the son of Arrighetto Capece, he thus addressed him :—

“Giannotto, you know how great an injury you have done me in the person of my daughter, for, as I always treated you well, you ought to have considered my honour and interest in all things as became a servant ; many people there are who, had they been used by you in this manner, would have put you to an ignominious death, which my pity for you would not permit. Wherefore, seeing, as you inform me, that you are honourably descended both by father and mother, I will put an end to your trouble, if you yourself are willing, and, releasing you from your captivity, restore at once both your honour and my own. You know that my daughter La Spina, whom, unluckily for you both, I found in dalliance with you, is a widow, and of a good fortune ; you are no stranger either to her temper or family ; concerning your own circumstances, at present I shall say not a word. Therefore I am disposed, if you are so inclined, that, as you have

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dishonourably made her your mistress, you now make her honourably your wife; and, accepting you for my son, I give you leave to remain with me as long as you both please."

Imprisonment had made much alteration in the person of Giannotto; but the greatness of mind which he possessed from his birth was not at all impaired, any more than the affection he still bore towards his mistress; and though he most earnestly desired what Currado had now so frankly offered, and saw himself entirely in his power, yet could he by no means dissemble what his brave soul prompted him to speak on this occasion, and therefore he replied in this manner: "Sir, neither a desire of power, a thirst of wealth, nor any other motive could ever induce me to plot like a traitor against your life or estate. I have loved your daughter, do still, and always shall love her, because I hold her worthy of it; and, if I have committed a crime, it is a crime inseparable from youth. Would people but once call to mind that they have been young themselves, and compare our offences with their own, those offences

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would appear less grievous. I have always wished for what you now offer, and should have requested it long since, could I have thought it would have been granted me; it is now the more pleasing, as it was less expected. But, if you intend nothing of what you say, feed me no longer with expectation, but rather send me back to my prison, and subject me to what ill-usage you please to inflict; for so long as I love La Spina, so long shall I love and reverence you for her sake."

Currado was astonished at hearing this, and esteeming him to be of a generous disposition, and fervent in his affection towards the lady, he valued him the more; wherefore he raised him up, and embraced him, and without more delay sent for his daughter. Her confinement had made her pale and meagre, and quite a different person from what she used to be, just as Giannotto seemed another man. There, by mutual consent, were the espousals solemnised; and after some days, without anybody knowing what was done, having furnished them with everything that was proper, and now thinking it a fit time to

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please the two mothers, he called his own wife and La Cavriuola together, and to the latter he said, "What would you say now, if I should show you your eldest son married to one of my daughters?" She replied, "I can only say this, that I shall think myself more obliged to you, if possible, than I am at present, as you will restore to me what is dearer than my own life; and by doing it in that manner you will in some measure recall all my lost hopes;" and with these words she began to weep. To his wife he then said, "And what will you think if I show you such a son-in-law?" "Whether he be a gentleman or a peasant," answered she, "if you like it I shall be pleased." "Well," replied Currado, "I hope in a few days to make you two happy women."

When the young couple had in a measure recovered their former looks, and had furnished themselves with suitable apparel, he one day asked Giusfredi if it would not add greatly to his joy could he have a sight of his mother. "I cannot believe," replied he, "that her misfortunes have suffered her to live so long; but, if it should be so,

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nothing could be more desirable, for, by her assistance, I might reasonably expect to recover my estate in Sicily." Currado then sent for both the ladies, who expressed the utmost satisfaction at beholding the bride, wondering nevertheless what inspiration had guided Currado to this extraordinary courtesy in marrying her to Giannotto; whilst Beritola, considering what she had heard from Currado, began to observe him very attentively; and by a hidden virtue, which had roused in her some resemblance of her son's features in his infancy, without waiting for any other proofs, she threw her arms about his neck, whilst excess of maternal joy and piety denied her the power of utterance; but, as if they had locked up all her senses, she swooned away in his arms. He, remembering to have seen her often in the castle without knowing her, was all amazement; yet now, by mere instinct of nature, immediately called her to mind, and, blaming himself for his long insensibility, embraced her in a most tender and affectionate manner. Beritola had no sooner recovered her senses, by the help of Currado's wife and daughter, who administered cold

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water and other necessary helps for such purpose, but she again began to embrace her son, using many kind and tender expressions full of maternal affection, he likewise expressing the same dutiful reverence to her. These affectionate greetings were repeated over and over, to the great joy of the beholders, whilst they recounted to each other their several misfortunes; and Currado, having signified to his friends, who heard it with great joy, the new alliance made by him, and appointed a magnificent entertainment suitable to the occasion, Giusfredi addressed himself to him in the following manner:—

“Sir, you have made me a happy man on many accounts, and treated my mother always with the utmost respect; wherefore, that nothing may be left undone which is in your power to do, I humbly beg you would oblige my mother and myself, and grace our entertainment with the presence of my brother, who now lives as a servant in the house of Guasparrino d’Oria, who, as I told you before, took us as a privateer; and, at the same time, that you would also send a proper person to Sicily, to learn the

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state of the country, and to inform himself concerning my father, whether he be alive or dead. If he be alive, then to know fully in what state or condition he is, and to come afterwards to us, and give us an account."

The motion made by Giusfredi was so pleasing to Currado, that without more delay he sent two discreet persons, one to Genoa and the other to Sicily. He who went to Genoa, having met with Guasparrino, entreated him, on the part of Currado, to send him Scacciato and his nurse, relating everything that Currado had done with regard to Giusfredi and his mother; which when Guasparrino had heard, he was greatly surprised, and he replied: "True it is, that I am ready to oblige Currado to the utmost of my power. I have had such a boy as you speak of, and his mother, for about fourteen years, whom I shall willingly send him; but tell him from me not to be too hasty in giving credit to what Giannotto (who calls himself Giusfredi) shall say, because he is a more wicked boy than he may imagine." Having said this, and made the messenger welcome, he sent privately for

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the nurse, and questioned her about the thing; who, having heard of the rebellion in Sicily, and understanding that Arrighetto was yet living, now laid all fear aside, and told him everything as it had happened, and the reason for her acting in the manner she had done. Guasparrino, finding the account which the nurse and messenger gave to be entirely the same, began now to give credit to it; and, inquiring more narrowly into all the circumstances, for he was a very cautious person, and finding them to fall exactly right, he grew ashamed of himself for his vile treatment of his captive, and to make him amends, since he knew of what consequence his father had been and now was, he gave him his daughter in marriage, a beautiful young lady of about eleven years of age, and with her a very large fortune. The time of feasting being over, he went on board a galley, well armed, taking with him his son and daughter, with the messenger and nurse, and arrived at Lerici, where he was received by Currado, and conducted from thence, with all his attendants, to a castle of his, which was at no great distance, where a most noble banquet was prepared for them.

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Now, as to the joy of the mother in meeting again with her son, of the two brethren in seeing one another, and of all three in beholding their faithful nurse, as well as the satisfaction which was manifested by all towards Guasparrino and his daughter, and by them again to the whole company, and by the whole company to Currado, his wife, children, and friends—this was beyond expression, and therefore I refer it to your more able imagination. And, that it might be rendered still more complete, it pleased God, a most liberal giver when He makes a beginning, to add the good news of the life and prosperity of Arrighetto Capece; for even as they were feasting, and the concourse great both of lords and ladies, it chanced that the first course was scarcely set upon the table before the messenger arrived who had been despatched to Sicily, and brought an account, amongst other things, concerning Arrighetto, that, being closely confined by King Charles when the insurrection first began in the country, the people ran to the prison, and having slain the guards, they set him at liberty, and appointed him their leader, he being Charles's

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principal enemy; and under his conduct they afterwards routed and slew many of the French, on which account he became a great favourite with King Pedro, who had reinstated him in all his former possessions. The messenger further announced that he was received with the utmost joy by him on account of the most welcome news concerning his wife and son, of whom he had not received the least intelligence since he had been a prisoner; and that he had sent a sloop to bring them back, which was now at hand, with a great number of gentry on board to bear them company.

This was most welcome news; and Currado immediately rose, with some of his friends, and went to meet the gentlemen and ladies who were sent to Beritola and Giusfredi, and, after giving them a most hearty welcome, he introduced them to the banquet, which was not half over. There they were beheld by the lady and by Giusfredi with such joy that the like was scarcely ever known; and before they would sit down they paid their compliments on the part of Arrighetto, in the best manner they were able, both to Currado and his lady, for the

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honour conferred on his wife and son, as well as upon himself, with the offer of anything that lay in his power for them to command. Turning also to Guasparrino, whose kindness came unlooked for, they assured him that, as soon as Arrighetto knew what he had done for Scacciato, similar acknowledgments would be made to him. After which they sat cheerfully down with the new-married people. Nor was it that day only that Currado feasted his son-in-law with all his relations and friends, but he continued to do so for some time, till at length they desired to depart; and taking leave in a most affectionate manner of Currado and his lady, and also of Guasparrino, they went on shipboard together—namely, Beritola and the two new-married couples, with their attendants; and, the wind proving fair, they soon got to Sicily, where they were received by Arrighetto with incredible joy; and it is reported that they lived for a long period together in the utmost felicity, with thankful hearts to Heaven for the mercies received by them.



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NOVEL VII

The Sultan of Babylon sends one of his daughters to be married to the King of Algarve; she, by divers accidents, in the space of four years fell into the hands of nine different men in different places. At length, being restored to her father, she went to the King of Algarve as a maid, and, as at first she was intended, to be his wife.*

PERCIANCE the novel related by Emilia, had it extended to greater length, would have moved the young ladies to compassionate tears for the accidents that had befallen Beritola; but it being now ended, the queen ordered Pamfilo to follow, who, in obedience to her commands, thus proceeded:—

It is no easy matter for us, most gracious ladies, to have a thorough knowledge of

* At the conclusion of the novel the number given is eight.

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everything we do ; for we often find that many, supposing if they were rich that they should then live securely and at ease, not only offer up their prayers to God, but studiously incur all kinds of danger and fatigue to become so, which, when effected, has been the occasion of their losing their lives by the hands of such people as have thirsted after their wealth, who, before they had attained to such riches, were their entire friends : others, who from a low estate have made their way to a throne, amidst a thousand dangerous encounters, and through the blood of their brethren and friends, expecting to find supreme felicity therein, have, besides the infinite cares and anxieties which they have experienced in that station, found to their cost, at last, that poison is often mingled in the golden cups of princes. Many people there are who covet some bodily accomplishment, such as strength or beauty, with which they who are endowed are taught that death, or a most calamitous life, is often occasioned thereby. But because I would not speak of all our frail desires, I dare affirm that there is not one of them which

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we can fix upon with any certainty of being happy by that choice. The safest way then is, to leave all to the good providence of God, who best knows our wants, and is most able to supply them. Men offend in coveting many things; but you ladies sin chiefly in one point, namely, in the desire of beauty; insomuch that not being satisfied with that share of it which nature has given you, you call in the assistance of art to improve it. It is upon this account that I shall relate what happened to a beautiful Saracen lady, who, in the space of four years, was, for her beauty, married nine several times.

It is now a long time since there lived a Sultan of Babylon, called Beminedab, who was fortunate in most of his affairs. Amongst other children, both male and female, he had a daughter named Alatiel, who, in the opinion of all that saw her, was the fairest lady in the whole world. And because the King of Algarve had afforded him great assistance in defeating a most numerous army of Arabians that had assailed him, and had demanded her afterwards in marriage, he very willingly consented thereto;

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and providing a ship, well equipped for the purpose, with all necessary provisions, and sending an honourable train both of lords and ladies to bear her company, he commended her at parting to the protection of Heaven. The sailors, as soon as a fit opportunity offered, hoisted their sails, and leaving the port of Alexandria, sailed prosperously many days; when, having passed the island of Sardinia, and now seeming to be near the end of their voyage, on a sudden contrary winds arose, which were so boisterous and bore so hard upon the ship that they often gave themselves over for lost. Nevertheless, for two days together, they tried all the means they could devise, amidst an infinite number of tempests, to weather it out; but all to no purpose, for every blast was worse than the former. And not being able to comprehend by marinal judgment where they were, or to see to any distance on account of the clouds and dark night, being now not far from Majorca, they felt the ship split; and perceiving no hopes of escaping, every one caring for himself only, they threw a little boat into the sea, reposing more confidence of safety that way than by

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abiding any longer in the broken ship. The men therefore that were in the ship went into the boat, one after another, although those who were first down made strong resistance with their drawn weapons against other followers; and, thinking to avoid death by this means, they ran directly into it; for the boat, not being able to bear them all, sunk straight to the bottom, and the people therein all perished.

The ship being driven furiously by the winds, though it was burst and half full of water, was at last stranded on the island of Majorca, no other person remaining on board but the lady and her women, all lying as it were lifeless, through the terror occasioned by the tempest. It struck with such violence, that it was fixed in the sand about a stone's-throw from the shore; where it continued all that night, the winds not being able to move it. When daylight appeared, and the storm was something abated, the lady, almost dead, lifted up her head and began, weak as she was, to call first one and then another of her servants; but all to no purpose, for such as she called for were far enough from her. Wherefore, receiving

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no answer, and seeing no one, she was greatly astonished; and raising herself up as well as she could, she beheld the ladies that were of her company, and some other of her women, lying all about her; and trying first to rouse one and then another of them, she scarcely found any that had the least understanding left, so much had sickness and fear together affected them, which added greatly to her consternation. Nevertheless, necessity constraining her, seeing that she was alone, she knew not where, she shook those that were living till she made them get up, and perceiving that they were utterly ignorant of what was become of all the men, and seeing the ship driven upon the sands, and full of water, she began with them to lament most grievously.

It was noonday before they could descry any person on the shore, or elsewhere, to afford them the least assistance. At length, about that time, a gentleman, whose name was Pericon da Visalgo, passing that way on his return from a country-house, with many of his servants, on horseback, upon seeing the ship, imagined what had happened, and immediately sent one of them on board, to

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see what was remaining in her. The servant got into the ship with some difficulty, and found the lady with the little company that was left her, who had all hidden themselves, through fear, under the forecastle. As soon as they saw him, they begged for mercy; but, not understanding each other's language, they then strove by signs to inform him of their misfortune. The servant carried the best account he could to his master of what he had seen; who ordered the ladies, and everything that was in the ship of any value, to be brought on shore, conducting them to one of his castles, where he endeavoured to comfort them under their misfortunes by this generous entertainment. By the richness of her dress, he supposed the chief lady to be some person of great consequence, which appeared more plainly by the great respect that was paid to her by all the women; and although she was pale and in disorder, through the great fatigue she had sustained, yet was he much taken with her beauty; and he resolved, if she had no husband, to make her his wife; or, if he could not have her as such, still not to lose her entirely. Pericon was a man of

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stern looks, and rough in his person ; and having treated the lady well for some time, by which means she had recovered her beauty, he was grieved that they could not understand each other, and that he was unable to learn who she was ; yet, being passionately in love, he used all the engaging arts he could devise to bring her to a compliance, but all to no purpose ; she refused all familiarities with him, which inflamed him the more. This the lady perceived, and finding, after some stay there, by the customs of the place, that she was among Christians, and where, if she came to be known, it would be of no great service to her ; supposing also that at last Pericon would gain his will, if not by fair means, yet by force, she resolved, with a true greatness of spirit, to tread all misfortune underfoot, commanding her women, of whom she had but three now alive, never to disclose her quality, unless there should be hopes of regaining their liberty ; recommending it farther to them to maintain their chastity, and declaring her fixed resolution never to comply with any one besides her husband ; for which they all commended

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her, promising to preserve their honour, as she had commanded them.

Every day did Pericon's passion increase, so much the more as the thing desired was near, and yet so difficult to be obtained: wherefore, perceiving that entreaty was to no purpose, he resolved to try what art and contrivance could do, reserving force to the last. And having once observed that wine was pleasing to her, not having been accustomed to it, as being forbidden by her country's laws, he determined to surprise her by means of this minister of Venus. And seeming now to have given over his amorous pursuit, which she had used her best endeavours to withstand, he provided one night an elegant entertainment, at which she was present, when he gave it in charge to the servant that waited upon her to serve her with several wines mingled together, which he accordingly did; whilst she, suspecting no such treachery, and pleased with the rich flavour, drank more than suited with her modesty, and, forgetting all her past troubles, became gay and merry; so that, seeing some of the women dance after the custom of Majorca, she also

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began to dance after the manner of the Alexandrians; which when Pericon observed, he supposed himself in a fair way of success, and plying her still with more meat and drink, continued this revelling the greatest part of the night. At length, when the guests departed, he went into her chamber with the lady, who having at that time more exhilaration than modesty, undressed herself before him, as if he had been one of her women, and got into bed. He made no delay in following her, and having quenched the light, lay down by her side; she, nothing loth, suffered him to accomplish his purpose. After this experience of affairs whereof she had heretofore been ignorant, she repented her lost time, being sorry that she had not sooner yielded to his solicitations; and, without waiting for a request, often thereafter invited him to a repetition—not, indeed, by words, but by gestures fully as expressive. At length fortune, unwilling that she who was to have been the wife of a king should become the mistress of a nobleman, prepared for her a more barbarous and cruel alliance.

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Pericon had a brother, twenty-five years of age, of a most complete person, called Marato; who having seen her, and flattering himself, from her behaviour towards him, that he was not displeasing to her, supposing also that nothing obstructed his happiness except the guard which his brother had over her, consequently contrived a most cruel design, which was not long without its wicked effect. There was by chance a ship in the haven at that time, laden with merchandise bound for Chiarenza in Romania, of which two young Genoese were the masters, who only waited for the first fair wind to go out: with them Marato made a contract to receive him with the lady the following night. When night came, having ordered how the thing should be managed, he went openly to the house, nobody having the least mistrust of him, taking with him some trusty friends, whom he had secured for that service, and concealed them near the house: in the middle of the night, therefore, he opened the door to them, and they slew Pericon as he was asleep in bed with the lady; seizing upon her, whom they found awake and in

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tears, and threatening to kill her if she made the least noise. They took also everything of value that belonged to Pericon, with which Marato and the lady went instantly on board, whilst his companions returned about their business. The wind proving fair, they soon set sail, whilst the lady, reflecting on both her misfortunes, seemed to lay them much to heart for a time ; till Marato, having wrought upon her senses by a powerful charm, known as Saint Cresci, consoled her so agreeably that she began to have the same affection for him that she had entertained for his brother ; when fortune, as if not content with what she had already suffered, prepared another change of life for her.

Her person and behaviour were such as to enamour the two masters of the ship, who neglected all other business to serve and please her, taking care all the while that Marato should have no cause to suspect it. And, being apprised of each other's love, they had a consultation together about it, when it was agreed to have her in common between them, as if love, like merchandise, admitted of partnership ; and

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observing that she was narrowly watched by Marato, and their design thereby frustrated, they took the opportunity one day, as the ship was under full sail, and he standing upon the poop looking towards the sea, to go behind and throw him overboard; whilst the ship had sailed on a full mile before it was known that he had fallen in. As soon as the lady heard of it, and saw no likely means of recovering him again, she fell into fresh troubles, when the two lovers came quickly to comfort her, using many kind and tender expressions, which she did not understand; though, indeed, she did not then so much lament Marato as her own private misfortunes. After some little time, imagining that she was sufficiently comforted, they fell into a dispute concerning which should have the first enjoyment of her; and from words they drew their swords and came to blows, the ship's crew not being able to part them, when one soon fell down dead, the other being desperately wounded; which occasioned fresh uneasiness to the lady, who now saw herself left alone, without any one to advise and help her; she was fearful also that the masters'

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relations and friends would turn their resentment against her; but the entreaties of the wounded survivor, and their speedy arrival at Chiarenza, saved her from the danger of death.

She went on shore with him there, and they dwelt together at an inn; whilst the fame of her beauty was spread all over the city, till it reached the ears of the Prince of Morea, who was then by chance at Chiarenza. He was impatient to get a sight of her, and after he had seen her was so charmed that he could think of nothing else; and being told in what manner she came hither, he began to contrive means how to obtain her, which when the wounded man's relations understood, they immediately sent her to him, to her great joy, no less than the prince's, she now thinking herself freed from all danger. The prince, perceiving her rare accomplishments, joined to a matchless person, though he could have no information concerning her, yet concluded that she must be nobly descended; and such was his fondness for her, that he treated her not as a mistress but a wife. She now recollecting what she had already

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suffered, and being well satisfied with her present situation, began to be easy and cheerful, whilst her charms increased to that degree that she was the chief subject of discourse throughout Romania.

Hereupon the Duke of Athens, a young and gay person, a relation also to the prince, had a mind to see her; and came one day thither under pretence of a visit to him, as usual, with a noble retinue, when he was handsomely entertained. Talking together, after some time, concerning the lady's great beauty, the duke asked whether she was such as fame had reported; to which the prince replied, "She far exceeds it; but let your own eyes convince you, and not my bare assertion." The duke soliciting the prince very earnestly to gratify his curiosity, they went into her apartment together, when she received them with great good manners and cheerfulness, being apprised of their coming; and though they could not have the pleasure of conversing together, as she understood little or nothing of their language, yet they looked upon her, the duke more especially, as a prodigy of nature, scarcely believing her to be a mortal

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creature ; and, without perceiving how much of the amorous poison he had taken in by intently gazing upon her, and meaning only to gratify himself with the sight of her, he soon became over head and ears in love.

After they had parted from her, and he had had time to reflect, he began to think the prince the happiest person in the universe, in being possessed of such a beauty ; and, after much musing upon it, having more regard to his lust than to his honour, he resolved at all adventures to deprive him of that bliss, and to secure it for himself : and having a heart to put what he had resolved into execution, setting all reason and justice aside, his mind was wholly taken up in devising a fit stratagem for his purpose.

One day, therefore, according to a most wicked agreement which he had made with a valet-de-chambre belonging to the prince, whose name was Ciuriaci, he gave secret orders to have his horses and baggage got ready for a sudden departure ; and the following night, taking a friend with him, and being both completely armed, they were introduced by that servant into the

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prince's chamber, whom they found in his shirt, looking out of a window towards the sea, to take the cool air, the weather being very hot, whilst the lady was fast asleep. Having already instructed his friend what he would have done, he went softly up to the window, and stabbed the prince with a dagger through the small of his back, and threw him out. Now the palace was seated upon the sea-shore, and very lofty ; and the window whence the prince stood looking was directly over some houses which the force of the waves had beaten down, and which were but little frequented ; on which account, as the duke had before contrived it, there was no great likelihood of the affair being discovered. The duke's companion, when he saw that the work was done, took a cord which he carried with him for that purpose, and seeming as if he were going to caress Ciuriaci, threw it about his neck, and drew it so tightly that he prevented his crying out, whilst the duke coming to his assistance, they soon despatched and threw him down after the prince. This being done, and plainly perceiving that they were not heard or seen by

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the lady or any one else, the duke took a light in his hand, and went on softly to the bed, where she lay in a sound sleep, and having gently removed the coverlet, stood beholding her some time with the utmost admiration. If she appeared so charming before in her garments, what was she not without them! Not at all dismayed with his late-committed sin, his hands yet reeking with blood, he crept into bed to her, she taking him all the while for the prince. After he had been with her for some time, he arose and ordered his people to seize her in such a manner that she could make no outcry; and, going through the same back door at which he had been introduced, he set her on horseback, and carried her away towards Athens. But as he was married he did not choose to bring her thither, but left her at one of his country seats, a little way out of town, where he secretly kept her, to her great grief, but allowing her everything that was necessary to a person of her rank.

The prince's servants waited that day till noon expecting his rising; but hearing nothing of him, and thrusting open the

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chamber doors, which were only closed, and finding nobody within, they concluded that he and the lady were gone privately to some other place to divert themselves for a few days, and therefore thought no more about the matter. The next day it happened, by great chance, that a fool going amongst those ruinous houses where the dead bodies were lying, took hold of the cord that was about Ciuriaci's neck, and dragged him along after him, which surprised many people to whom he was known, who, by fair words and much persuasion, prevailed upon the fellow to show them where he had found him; and there, to the great grief of the whole city, they saw the prince's body also, which they caused to be interred with all due pomp and reverence. Inquiring afterwards who should commit so horrid a deed, and perceiving that the Duke of Athens was not to be found, but was gone privately away, they judged (as it really was) that he had done it, and taken the lady with him. Immediately they elected the prince's brother to be their sovereign, inciting him to revenge so horrid a fact, and promising to assist him

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to the utmost of their power. He being afterwards fully assured of the truth of what they had before but surmised, collected together all his relations, friends, and vassals, and mustering a powerful army, directed his course against the duke, who had no sooner heard of these preparations but he also levied a great army, and many princes came to his relief. Amongst the rest, the Emperor of Constantinople sent his son Constantine and his nephew Emanuel, attended by a goodly body of troops, who were kindly received by the duke, and the duchess more especially, she being their sister-in-law.

Things tending every day more and more to a war, the duchess had them both one day into her chamber, when, with abundance of tears, she recounted to them the whole history and occasion of the war, and the ill-usage she had received from the duke on account of this woman, whom she imagined he kept privately; and complaining very earnestly to them, she conjured them, for his honour and her own ease and comfort, to give her their best assistance. The two young lords knew all this matter

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before, and therefore, without asking many questions, they comforted her as well as they could, and informing themselves where the lady was kept, they took their leave. Hearing much talk of her marvellous beauty, they became very desirous of seeing her, and entreated the duke to show her to them, who, never remembering what had happened to the prince on a like occasion, promised to do so ; and, ordering a magnificent entertainment to be prepared in a pleasant garden belonging to the palace where the lady was kept, the next day he took them, and a few friends, to dine with her. Constantine being seated at the table, began, full of admiration, to gaze upon her, declaring to himself that he had never seen anything like her, and that the duke, or any other person, was excusable, who, to possess so rare a beauty, should commit any act of baseness or treason ; and looking still more and more upon her, and evermore commending her, it happened to him just as it had to the duke ; for, going away quite enamoured of her, he had given over all thoughts of the war, contriving only how to steal her away from the duke, at the

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same time that he carefully concealed his love from every one.

Whilst he was in this agitation, the time came when they were to march against the prince, who was now advancing near the duke's territories; upon which the duke, with Constantine and the rest, according to the resolution that was taken, marched out of Athens to secure the frontiers, and to prevent the prince's passing any further. Continuing there for some days, and Constantine having still the lady at heart, and concluding, now the duke was absent, that he might more easily compass his intent, he, that there might be a pretence for his return, feigned himself extremely sick; and, with the duke's consent, leaving the command of his troops to Emanuel, he returned to Athens to his sister's, where, after some days, having encouraged her to talk of her husband's baseness in keeping a mistress, he at last said that, if she would give her consent, he would rid her of that trouble, by removing the lady out of the way. The duchess, supposing that this was spoken out of pure regard to her, and not to the lady, replied that she should be

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very glad if it could be done in such a manner as the duke should never know that she was in any way accessory, which Constantine fully promised, and she accordingly agreed that he should do it as he thought most advisable. He provided, therefore, with all secrecy, a light vessel, and sent it one evening near to the garden where the lady was kept, having first informed some of his people that were in it what he would have them do; and taking others with him to the house, he was kindly received by the servants in waiting there, and by the lady herself, who took a walk with him at his request, attended by the servants belonging to them both, into the garden; when, drawing her aside towards a door which opened to the sea, as if he had business to communicate from the duke, on a signal given the bark was brought close to the shore, and she seized upon and carried into it, whilst he, turning back to the people that were with her, said, "Let no one stir or speak a word at the peril of his life; for my design is not to rob the duke of his lady, but to take away the reproach of my sister." To this none

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being hardy enough to return an answer, Constantine, boarding the vessel, and seating himself by the lady, who shed abundant tears, bid the men ply their oars, and make the best of their way, which they accordingly did, so that they reached Egina by the next morning. There they landed, and reposed awhile; and during their stay Constantine found means to console his captive, who had great reason to curse her beauty. From thence they went to Chios, where, for fear of his father, and to prevent her being taken away from him, he chose to abide as a place of security; and, though she seemed uneasy for a time, yet she soon recovered as she had done before, and became reconciled to the state of life wherein bad fortune had thrown her.

In the meantime Osbech, king of the Turks, who was constantly at war with the emperor, came by chance to Smyrna, and hearing how Constantine lived a lascivious life at Chios, with a mistress that he had stolen, and no provision made for his safety, he went privately one night with some armed vessels, and made a descent upon the town, surprising many people in

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their beds before they knew of his coming upon them, and killing all that stood upon their defence; and after he had burnt and destroyed the whole country, he put the prisoners and booty which he had taken on board, and returned to Smyrna. Upon taking a view of the prisoners, Osbech, who was a young man, saw this lady, and knowing that she was Constantine's mistress, because she was found asleep in his bed, he was much pleased at it, and took her for his own wife, and having celebrated their nuptials they lived together very happily for several months.

Before this event happened, the emperor had been making a treaty with Bassano, king of Cappadocia, who was to fall on Osbech on one side, whilst he attacked him on the other; but they could not come to a full agreement, because Bassano made a demand of some things which the other was unwilling to grant; yet now, hearing of what had befallen his son, and being in the utmost concern, he immediately closed with the King of Cappadocia, requesting him to march with all expedition against Osbech, whilst he was preparing to invade him on

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his part. When Osbech heard of this, he assembled his army before he should be surrounded by two such mighty princes, and marched on to meet the King of Cappadocia, leaving his lady behind, with a faithful servant of his, at Smyrna: they soon came to a battle, wherein Osbech's army was entirely routed, and himself slain.

Bassano remaining victorious, he proceeded on to Smyrna, the people making their submission to him all the way as he went. Meanwhile Osbech's servant, whose name was Antiochus, who had the lady in charge, although he was in years, yet seeing her so beautiful, and forgetting the regard which was due to his lord, soon became in love with her himself; and, as he understood her language, it was a great comfort to her, because she had been forced to live for some years like a deaf and dumb person for want of understanding other people, or being understood by them. This gave him great advantages, and whilst his master was warring abroad, he spared no pains to gain her consent, in which he succeeded so well that she conceived a strong affection for him, and became his mistress. But when

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they understood that Osbech was slain, and that Bassano carried all before him, without waiting for his coming upon them, they fled away privately, taking with them what belonged to Osbech of any value, and came to Rhodes. They had not been there long before Antiochus was taken extremely ill; and having a merchant of Cyprus along with him, who was his great friend, and finding himself at the point of death, he resolved to bequeath to him the care of his lady and wealth also; and calling them both to him, he spoke as follows:—"I find myself declining apace, which grieves me much, because I had never more pleasure in living than at present; yet one thing is a great comfort to me, namely, that I shall die in the arms of those two persons whom I love and value beyond all the rest of the world, that is to say, in yours, my dearest friend, and in that lady's whom I have loved, ever since I have known her, more than my own life. I am uneasy, indeed, when I consider that I leave her here a stranger, and destitute both of help and advice, and should be infinitely more so if you were not with us, who, I know, will

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take the same care of her, on my account, as you would of myself; therefore I entreat you, in case I should die, to take my affairs and her together under your protection, and to act, with regard to both, as you think will be most for the comfort of my departed soul. And you, my dearest love, let me beg of you never to forget me, that I may boast, in the next world, that I have been beloved by the fairest lady that ever nature formed. Assure me of these two things, and I shall die satisfied."

The merchant and lady were both much concerned, and promised to fulfil his desires, if he should chance to die; and soon afterwards he departed this life, when they took care to have him decently interred; which being done, and the merchant having despatched all his affairs, and wanting to return home in a Catalan ship that was there, questioned the lady, to know what she intended to do, because it became necessary for him to go back to Cyprus: she made answer that she was willing to go with him, hoping that for the love he bore towards his friend he would regard her as his own sister. He replied that he

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was ready to oblige her in everything; and, that he might the better defend her from all injuries whatever, till they came to Cyprus, he should call her his wife. Being on board the ship, they had a cabin with one little bed allotted them, agreeably to the account they had given of themselves, by which means that thing was brought about which neither of them intended when they came from Rhodes; that is to say, thrown thus closely together, they were unable to resist the amorous incitements of their situation, and forgot all the fine promises they had made to Antiochus. Before they reached Baffa, where the Cyprian merchant dwelt, they began to consider themselves as man and wife, and as such took up their abode there.

Now a certain gentleman happened to arrive at Baffa about that time, on his own private affairs, whose name was Antigonus, one advanced in years, and of more understanding than wealth; for in meddling much in the affairs of the King of Cyprus he had found fortune very unkind to him. Passing one day by the house where the lady lodged, the merchant being gone about his business

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to Armenia, and seeing her by chance at the window, he took more than ordinary notice of her, on account of her beauty ; till at length he began to recollect he had seen her somewhere before, but could by no means remember where. She, also, who had long been the sport of fortune, the time now drawing near when her troubles were to have an end, as soon as she saw Antigonus, remembered that she had seen him in no mean station in her father's service at Alexandria. And having now great hopes of regaining her former dignity by his advice and assistance, she took the opportunity of the merchant's absence to send for him. Being come to her, she modestly asked him whether he were not Antigonus of Fama-gosta, as she really believed. He answered that he was, and added, " Madam, I am convinced that I know you, but I cannot call to mind where it is that I have seen you ; therefore, if it be no offence, let me entreat you to tell me who you are."

The lady, perceiving him to be the same person, wept very much, and throwing her arms about his neck, asked him, at last, as one confounded with surprise, if he had

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never seen her at Alexandria. Then he immediately knew her to be Alatiel, the sultan's daughter, whom they supposed to have been drowned; and being about to pay homage to her, she would not suffer him to do it, but made him sit down. He then, in a most humble manner, asked her where she had been, and whence she now came; because for some years it was believed, through all Egypt, that she was drowned. She replied, "I had much rather it had so happened than to have led such a life as I have done; and I believe my father, if he knew it, would wish the same." With these words the tears ran down her cheeks in great abundance; and he replied, "Madam, do not afflict yourself before it is necessary to do so; tell me only what has happened to you; perhaps it may be of such a nature that, by the help of God, we may find a remedy." "Antigonus," replied the fair lady, "I think when I see you that I behold my father: moved therefore with the like duty and tenderness that I owe to him, I shall reveal to you what I might have kept secret. There are few persons that I should desire to meet with sooner than yourself to

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advise me; if, therefore, when you have heard my whole story, you think there is any probability of restoring me to my former dignity, I must beg your assistance; if you think there is none, then I conjure you to tell no person living that you have either seen or heard anything about me."

After which, shedding abundance of tears during the whole relation, she gave a full account of what had befallen her, from the time of her shipwreck at Majorca to that very hour. Antigonus showed himself truly concerned at what he had heard, and, thinking some little time about it, he said to her, "Madam, since it has never been known, in all your misfortunes, who you were, I will assuredly restore you to your father, to whom you shall be more dear than ever, and afterwards you shall be married to the King of Algarve." She inquiring how that could be brought about, he let her know in what manner he intended to do it. Therefore, that no delay might intervene to prevent it, he returned directly to Famagosta, and waiting upon the king, he thus addressed him: "My liege, you may, if you please, do at once great honour to yourself and service

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to me who am impoverished on your account, and that without any expense." The king desiring to know by what means, Antigonus thus answered: "A young lady is just come to Baffa—daughter to the sultan—who was generally thought to have been drowned, and who, to preserve her honour, hath undergone great calamities; she is now without means, and desirous of returning to her father: if, therefore, you will be so good as to send her home under my conduct, it will redound greatly to your honour, and prove much to my advantage, nor can the sultan ever forget the favour." The king, moved by a truly royal spirit, replied that he was well pleased with the proposal, and caused her to be brought in great state to Famagosta, where she was received with all honour and respect, both by him and the queen; and, being questioned by them concerning her misfortunes, she made such answers as she had been before taught by Antigonus.

In a few days afterwards, at her own request, she was sent with a great retinue both of lords and ladies, and conducted all the way by Antigonus, to the sultan's court; where, with what joy they were all received,

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it is needless here to mention. When they had rested awhile after their journey, the sultan became desirous of knowing how it happened that she was now living, and where she had been all this time, without his being ever able to hear a word concerning her. Then she, who had all Antigonus's lectures perfectly by heart, gave her father the following narration :—

“Sir, about twenty days after my departure from you, our ship was split in the night by a violent tempest, and driven on the western coasts, near to a place called Aguamorta ; nor did I ever learn what befell the men that were in it. I only remember this, that when daylight appeared, and I seemed recovered, as it were, from death to life, certain peasants of the country, spying the ship's wreck, came to plunder it ; whilst I was carried first on shore, with two of my women, who were immediately borne away by some young fellows, and taken different ways, so that I could never learn what became of either of them. I also was seized by two of them, making the best defence I could ; and as they were dragging me towards the wood by the hair of my

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head, four persons on horseback came riding by, when they immediately left me and fled. The gentlemen on horseback, who appeared to possess some authority, came to me, and we spoke to each other, without knowing what either of us said. At last, after conferring together, they set me upon one of their horses, and carried me to a monastery of religious women, according to their laws, where I was received with great honour and respect; and in their company I served with much devotion Saint Cresci in Val Cava, whom the women of that country hold in great esteem. And after I had been there for some time, and learnt a little of their language, they began to inquire of me who I was, and from whence I came; whilst I, fearful of telling the truth, lest they should have expelled me as an enemy to their religion, made them believe that I was daughter to a gentleman of Cyprus, who, sending me to be married to one of Crete, we happened to be driven thither by ill weather, and shipwrecked. Conforming to their customs in many things, lest I should give offence, I was asked, at length, by the chief among them, whom they call Lady Abbess, whether I desired to return to

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Cyprus; and I answered that I desired nothing more. But she, tender of my honour, would never trust me with any persons that were going to Cyprus, till, about two months ago, certain French gentlemen with their ladies came this way, one of whom was related to the abbess; who, understanding that they were going to visit the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, where he whom they believe to be God was buried, after he had been put to death by the Jews, recommended me to them, and desired that they would deliver me to my father at Cyprus. What respect and civilities I received both from the gentlemen and their ladies, it would be needless to mention. Accordingly we went on ship-board, and came in a few days to Baffa, where, when I saw myself arrived, a stranger to every person, nor knowing what to say to these gentlemen, who were to present me to my father, behold, by the great providence of God, whom should I meet with upon the shore but Antigonus, the very moment we were landed? I called to him in our language, that none of them might understand us, and desired him to own me as his daughter. He easily understood my meaning, and,

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showing great tokens of joy, entertained the company as well as his narrow circumstances would allow, and brought me to the King of Cyprus, who received and sent me hither, with such marks of respect as I am no way able to relate. If there be anything omitted in this relation, Antigonus, who has often heard the whole from me, will report it."

Antigonus then, turning to the sultan, said, "My lord, according both to her own account and the information of the gentlemen and their wives, she has said nothing but truth. One part only she has omitted, as not suiting with her great modesty to report, namely, what the gentlemen and their ladies told me of the most chaste and virtuous life that she had led amongst those religious women, and of their great sorrow at parting, which, if I were fully to recount to you, would take up all this day and night too. Let it suffice then that I have said enough, according to what I could both hear and see, to convince you that you have the fairest as well as the most virtuous daughter of any prince in the world."

The sultan was overjoyed with this relation, begging over and over that God would pour down His blessings on all who had

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showed favour to his daughter, and particularly the King of Cyprus, who had sent her home so respectfully ; and, having bestowed great gifts upon Antigonus, he gave him leave to return to Cyprus, sending letters, as also a special ambassador, to the king, to thank him on her account. And now, desiring that what he had formerly proposed should take effect—namely, that she should be married to the King of Algarve—he wrote to give him a full relation of the whole matter, adding that he should send for her, if he desired the match to proceed. The king was much pleased with the news, and sent for her in great state ; and she, who had passed through the hands of eight men, now came to him as a pure virgin. As such he received her in full confidence, and she, as his queen, lived happily with him for the rest of their lives. Hence comes that saying : “A kissed mouth suffers no harm, but renews itself like the moon.”

END OF VOL. I.

